

Gowda named Indian premier

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's first Hindu nationalist government fell Tuesday when its prime minister resigned moments before he was expected to lose a no-confidence vote in parliament amid criticism of his party's policies as anti-Muslim. Hours later India's president appointed H. D. Deve Gowda, the leader of the United Front, as prime minister and invited him to form India's next government. Mr. Gowda will be sworn in on Saturday and given 11 days to prove his majority in the lower house of parliament. The United Front is a coalition of 13 socialist and lower-caste parties. That is the procedure that the outgoing prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, failed to complete Tuesday afternoon. After a 90-minute speech in parliament defending his Bharatiya Janata party, Mr. Vajpayee avoided the no-confidence motion he was expected to lose by announcing his resignation (story on page 4). Many opposition legislators jeered at him as he left to submit his resignation to the president, making his government the shortest-lived one in India's history, ruling for only 13 days.

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King reaffirms Jordan's pan-Arab commitments, urges unified efforts

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein recalling that Jordan was one of the founders of the Arab League, called on Tuesday for intensifying and unifying Arab efforts to enable the Arab League to carry out its mission in ensuring Arab integration at all levels.

Addressing a visiting delegation of permanent delegates to the Arab League, King Hussein stressed Jordan's support for Arab causes in general and the Palestinian cause in particular.

The King voiced support for the Palestinians through their sole and legitimate representative the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in their efforts to regain legitimate rights on their national soil.

King Hussein said it was premature to discuss or to draw a picture for future Jordanian-Palestinian relations. Jordan will continue to support the Palestinians without interfering in their internal affairs, he said.

The King reiterated that Jordan had no ambitions nor any designs over the Palestinians. "The future is left to the stage when the Palestinian people enjoy their rights on their national soil," he said. "By that time the brothers will discuss amongst themselves the nature of relation they want to have."

He added that he requested the Palestinian leadership more than once not to discuss at the issue of the shape of future relations between Jordan and Palestine because suspicions were frequently raised about Jordan's intentions towards the Palestinian people.

King Hussein praised the Palestinian elections to a legislative council held in January in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) area, as an example of honesty and integrity. The election reflected the people's feelings vis-a-vis the present stage, he said. He called on the Palestinians to support and cooperate with their legitimate lead-

ership and to discuss all views within the context of Palestinian unity.

King Hussein also voiced Jordan's support for the Iraqi people, and stressed that Jordan stands against any aggression on any Arab country.

The King welcomed the oil-for-food deal reached between Iraq and the United Nations to meet for the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The King voiced hope that the Iraqi people regain their rights and that respect for human rights, democracy and dialogue between all parties be the dominate features in Iraq.

He stressed the importance of safeguarding Iraqi unity and sovereignty.

The King expressed hope to see strong and close Arab ties, saying the Arab Nation had been too late in convening regular Arab summits.

"In my view we have been too late in holding summit conferences, but God willing, summits and meetings will be

held and the circle will be further expanded to accommodate us all in the Arab World," the King said, adding that there was no justification nor any reason for suspending Arab summits.

On the peace process, King Hussein said: "We do not know how things will go in the future. Anyhow, we believe that the move towards establishing comprehensive peace in the region has started."

Jordan does not fear peace, he said. "Peace might lead and will lead us to what we aspire for. We are always capable of defending our rights, land, soil and to move from this stage to a better one," he said.

He expressed hope that Syria and Lebanon would also regain their land through negotiations with Israel, adding that he did not find any obstacle in the face of the Syrians and Lebanese reaching their goal, "given

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His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday meets with a delegation representing the permanent delegates to the Arab League (Petra photo)

Crown Prince: Arab countries should enhance common identity to be able to fight off the challenges of modern age

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Tuesday that Arab countries had a duty to enhance the concept and common identity of the Arab Nation to enable it to deal with the challenges of the modern age.

In an address to a visiting delegation of Saudi businessmen at the Royal Court, the Crown Prince also urged Arab countries to seek regional integration and to

inter-Arab cooperation in different domains.

The Prince said efforts were under way in Jordan to enable the Kingdom to stop relying on foreign aid as a basic element. He said Jordan needed foreign aid when it was facing exceptional regional circumstances far exceeding its means and potentials.

He said that Jordan is seeking through an economic reform programme to reduce

the deficits in its budget and balance of payments.

A package of economic laws has been adopted to help boost the economy with the help of this programme, which is being applied with the help of international institutions, the Crown Prince added.

Referring to the countries bordering the Red Sea, which include Jordan as well as

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Kabariti heads for Algeria

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Tuesday left for an official visit to Algeria during which he will hold talks with President Liamine Zerwal and other government leaders.

Mr. Kabariti will also visit Tunis for talks with President Zein Al Abideen Ben Ali. The talks in both countries will cover bilateral relations and pan-Arab affairs.

Several agreements will be concluded between Jordan and Algeria covering cooperation in economic, trade, information, cultural, health and other fields.

Mr. Kabariti is accompanied by Minister of Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali, Senator Taher Hikmah and deputies Ibrahim Zoubi, Basam Emoush, Farah Rabadi and Nader Thuheirah.

Just before the prime minister's departure, the Lower House of Parliament issued a statement condemning the recent murder of seven French monks in Algeria.

A house statement said that the "Arab and Islamic nations," which suffered from terrorism for long, strongly condemn this brutal attack against innocent people because such actions are

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Peres, Netanyahu wind up campaign for elections seen wide open at last minute

Combined agency dispatches

PRIME MINISTER Shimon Peres and opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu crisscrossed Israel Tuesday on a last day flurry of campaigning for general elections in which the Labour incumbent said "everything is possible."

With new opinion polls showing Mr. Peres with only a slim three-point lead over Mr. Netanyahu in Israel's first direct election of a prime minister, both men waged a massive get-out-the-vote effort for Wednesday's general election.

"We had four outstanding

years (in office), it would be a disaster if we stop," Mr. Peres told a meeting of 150 Labour Party activists in Ashkelon, where there is a big community of Russian-speaking immigrants who represent a key swing vote to Israel.

"We have 24 hours left, everyone must roll up their sleeves and go from house to house, and person to person, to get out the vote," he said.

Mr. Peres insisted he was "completely optimistic" going into the polls, but added that "everything is possible today in the land of Israel and rightly so."

The 72-year-old Labour leader, considered the key architect of the peace process which has brought autonomy to most Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and a start to normalisation of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours, warned that a Likud win on Wednesday would change everything.

Labour charges that Mr. Netanyahu, by ruling out more "territorial concessions" or possible independence for Palestinians in permanent peace negotiations due to be completed by May 1999 has shut the door

on peace.

"If Bibi Netanyahu wins, terrorism will increase," Mr. Peres said, turning the tables on Likud charges that Palestinian autonomy has undermined security and left every Israeli a potential target for suicide bombers and other attacks.

"If we, God forbid, cut off the peace process and the intifada resumes, and we lose our economic growth, only God knows when we will be able to resume it," Mr. Peres said.

Pollsters said Tuesday's

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A different experience for Israelis this time

By Ghazi Saadi

IN TODAY'S Israeli general elections a prime minister for the Jewish state is to be directly elected by the voters and not by the 120 members of parliament. This is being done for the first time in the country's history under a new election law.

A total of 3,930,250 people, including 447,000 Israeli Arabs, are eligible to vote. Among the voters are 2,600 Arabs living in the Arab sector of Jerusalem who acquired Israeli citizenship and 1,000 others living in the occupied Golan Heights.

The number of ballot boxes is 6,714 installed in different parts of the country including military camps, where the voting started Tuesday. Israeli diplomats abroad as well as marines and seamen voted a week ago.

According to official statistics, 640,000 voters will be

participating in the elections for the first time one third of them have just turned 18 and another third new immigrants.

Under the new elections law, a candidate for the presidency should win 50.5 per cent of the total number of votes of those who actually took part in the elections. As for the Knesset a bloc should win at least 45,000 votes to enter legislative.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Supervising the election process is a committee chaired by a supreme court judge and representing all the incumbent parliament members.

The committee has a budget of nearly \$30 million and 20,000 policemen will keep law and order during the elections.

Shimon Peres from the Labour Party and Benjamin

Netanyahu from the Likud Party are running for the premiership. There are 19 lists of candidates running for parliamentary seats.

Under the new law, the premier-elect will not require a vote of confidence from the Knesset because he has been elected directly by the people. But the ministers should win the Knesset's confidence. If the ministers fail to win confidence it means that the

prime minister himself does not enjoy such confidence. This means a new general election for the prime minister and the Knesset.

The new law also says that 61 votes are needed to bring down the government.

The prime minister has the authority to dissolve parliament with approval from the head of state. But if the prime minister resigns elec-

tions should be held to elect a new premier but parliament in this case will not be changed.

Under the new law an elected premier should form his government in 45 days. If he fails to do so, new elections should be held to elect a premier.

According to opinion polls held over the past two months, Mr. Peres is bound to win and form government. However, the results might be different especially if new suicide attacks were carried out killing a large number of Israelis. In this case the balance will be tipped in favour of Mr. Netanyahu.

The polls indicate that Mr. Peres has a six to four per cent edge over Mr. Netanyahu and that Mr. Peres could form a coalition government involving all the political parties represented in the Knesset.

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Cabinet endorses draft laws on official media

Debate focuses on pros and cons of commercialising institutions

By Ghafiah Alul

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Cabinet on Tuesday endorsed two draft laws which would allow for the restructuring of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and the Radio and Television Corporation.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said after the Cabinet meeting the two laws would be referred to Parliament, which has the right to endorse them, amend them or reject them.

Dr. Muasher noted that the two draft laws would grant Petra and the Radio

and Television Corporation complete financial and administrative independence. New boards of directors would be appointed to shoulder the responsibility of developing their independent information policies, the minister said.

In a debate organised by the American embassy on Tuesday, entitled "restructuring and privatising the Ministry of Information and its media institutions," Dr. Muasher appeared determined to proceed with the restructuring plan for official media organisations despite the vocal opposition that his

plans stirred among journalists and some politicians.

Dr. Muasher said the official media should be given the opportunity to operate on commercial basis in order to be more efficient and successful against competition.

Representing views opposed to the minister's plans in the debate was columnist Fahed Faneh, who said having the radio and television run by boards of directors independently from the supervision of the government would only "guarantee a false success," citing what he called the failure of other governmental institutions en-

joying similar independence. "Appointing a board of directors does not mean success and there is clear evidence for that," he said.

Dr. Muasher said, however, that restructuring the official media and ensuring its financial independence would improve its performance and would enable it to attract qualified personnel.

"We feel that the performance of the Radio and Television Corporation has deteriorated due to the administrative constraints imposed on it

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JPA takes its 'case' to Parliament speakers

By Samir Barhoum

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Ahmad Lawzi and Saad Hayel Srour, on Tuesday met with the Jordan Press Association (JPA) president and board members to discuss issues related to a draft JPA law which has sparked a controversy between the JPA board and Information Minister Marwan Muasher.

JPA President Sualeiman Al Qudah said the meetings with the parliament speakers were part of moves taken by the JPA board to protest the Ministry of Information's

drafting of the law without JPA participation.

"The two meetings were part of moves taken by JPA board on the draft law which is expected to be debated by parliament in its upcoming session, the minister's position and to call for the cooperation of all concerned to reach a draft that would serve the interests of all parties and meet the journalists' demands," Mr. Qudah told the Jordan Times.

He said the JPA board had to take such moves to explain its position because the draft law would soon be referred to the Lower House for approval.

The Jordan News Agency,

Petra, said the Lower House speaker was briefed by Mr. Qudah and the board members on their views on the draft law.

Mr. Srour said at the meeting that any draft law referred by the government to the Lower House, be it on the JPA or any other issue of national interest, should be discussed by a specialised House committee.

During the course of its debate, he said, the committee has to meet with the parties concerned with the law to hear their views and positions.

"At the House, we have firm convictions in the need to consult with specialists and

the concerned in the course of discussing any draft law to enrich the dialogue and to enable all concerned to reach the best decision that would serve national interests and serve all parties," said Mr. Srour.

The JPA president said he could not comment on the draft law because he had not seen it. "I cannot judge it until I read it. What I know about it thus far is through indirect sources," he said, criticising the ministry for preparing the draft law in the absence of the association.

He said he expects to have a meeting soon with Dr.

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Controversy erupts over MPs' 'junkets' abroad - courtesy of Royal Jordanian

Investigative panel, lashing out at critics, says trips to RJ stations are necessary to access airline's situation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A visit by members of a parliamentary committee to Royal Jordanian (RJ) offices in three European capitals has sparked a controversy that only the court might be able to settle, with one deputy threatening to sue a local columnist over accusations he made about the purpose of the visit.

Deputy Ahmad Kassasbeh has threatened to take Al Ra'i columnist Fahed Al Faneh to court over re-

marks the writer made in an article published in Al Ra'i last week over the parliamentary committee's visit to Royal Jordanian (RJ) offices in Madrid, London and Rome.

In his article, Dr. Faneh scathingly attacked members of the parliamentary committee entrusted with studying the affairs of the national carrier, saying a 12-day trip they were making to Madrid, London and Rome was a "farce" and a waste of public funds that would achieve no purpose but providing the deputies

with a free touristic trip to Europe.

The columnist, who often spurs controversy in his articles, said there was no need for the trip because the deputies could have reviewed all the facts they needed about RJ at headquarters in Amman.

He said the deputies chose to go to European capitals because "tourism and entertainment were on their minds and first class air travel tickets, food, tours and the hotel bills will be paid by RJ."

"It is not unlikely that the deputies will also ask RJ to pay for the gifts that they will bring back to their wives to order to make up for their sins," Dr. Faneh also wrote, claiming that the lawmakers had asked Royal Jordanian to buy them suitcases "and fill them with shirts and hats to protect themselves from Europe's sun."

The accusations Dr. Faneh made reached the parliamentarians on their London leg of the tour, prompting Deputy Kassas-

beh to publish an angry reply to Dr. Faneh in Al Ra'i newspaper yesterday saying that the remarks would not go unnoticed and Dr. Faneh will have to answer for them in a court of law.

"As for your claims that we requested gifts and suitcases (from RJ), I challenge you and RJ to prove that, because we are not among those who can be bought. I will demand that you prove your accusations in a court of law because you questioned our integri-

ty and dragged our wives into your article," Deputy Kassasbeh told Dr. Faneh in his reply from London.

Mr. Kassasbeh, who quit the Islamic Action Front parliamentary bloc after falling out with the group over his decision not to withhold confidence from the government in violation of a bloc agreement, rejected Dr. Faneh's accusation that the trip was not necessary for the purposes of the committee in light of the complaints he said his committee had received about the RJ offices they

were visiting.

Mr. Kassasbeh said the House had initially asked that it finance the whole trip but ended up paying daily allowances for the lawmakers. RJ paid for their tickets and accommodation.

"What is wrong with RJ meeting part of the expenses of the House whose budget is limited anyway," said Mr. Kassasbeh.

The lawmaker also rejected Dr. Faneh's characterisation of the commit-

tee's trip as "a farce," saying the description better fits what Dr. Faneh wrote, stressing twice in his reply that he would take the columnist to court.

A parliamentary committee has been studying the status and performance of RJ for over two years and Mr. Kassasbeh said the panel had not been able to finalise a report on its work due to difficulties and "obstacles" it had been facing and because it wants its report to be "accurate and comprehensive."

Palestinians hope Israeli elections will bring end to military closure

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinians are waiting anxiously for Wednesday's elections in Israel, not to see who wins the polls but hoping that once they are over, life in the territories can begin to recover from weeks of military closure and political paralysis.

Officials and ordinary citizens alike complain openly about the difficulties caused by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres' decision to put the peace process on hold and seal off the West Bank and the Gaza Strip while he battles for the reelection of his Labour Party.

"The Israeli elections have frozen the relationship between our two sides, nothing is happening," said Hassan Asfour, head of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) department in charge of negotiations with Israel.

"The Israeli political process has been paralysed by the elections, and so our work has been paralysed," he told AFP.

The Peres government agreed to the official launch early this month of the last stage of the Palestinian peace process — the start of negotiations on a final settlement to be achieved by May 1999.

But after a formal two-day launch in Taba, Egypt,

the talks were suspended until after the elections. Mr. Asfour said meetings between the two sides on day-to-day matters were continuing, "but they yield no results."

"If you ask the Israelis anything, they say they can only implement decisions after the elections," he said. For most Palestinians, the worst aspect of the elections has been the military closure of the territories imposed three months ago at the start of a spate of suicide bombings in Israel by Palestinian militants.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has called on Israel to lift the closure as soon as the elections are over. "We hope that after the elections (the closure) will be removed and everything will go smoothly," he said.

But fearing a resumption of the attacks will knock Israeli opinion to the right and torpedo his election chances, Mr. Peres has steadily tightened the blockade in the run-up to polling day.

On Sunday the Israeli army announced that all movement of goods and persons between the territories and Israel was prohibited until after the election with the exception of humanitarian emergencies and top Palestinian offi-

cials. As a result, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been prevented from reaching jobs inside Israel and with summer holidays approaching, thousands more who work abroad have been unable to obtain the permits needed to visit their families.

"I had a permit to work in Israel next month but since last week, they have prevented me from entering because of the elections," said a 45-year-old labourer who asked not to be identified.

"This isn't fair. We are against violence and I hope that after the election the closure will be lifted and all workers can get into Israel again," he said.

"There is no excuse for punishing ordinary Palestinians just so one Israeli party or another can win the election," said Fajri Al Kheri, a deputy PNA minister who handles coordination of civilian matters with the Israelis.

Mr. Kheri's office is in charge, among other things, of obtaining travel permits from Israel for Palestinians to move between the West Bank and Gaza Strip or to enter the territories from abroad, notably via the bridge from Jordan.

But as the closure has tightened, few if any of the

hundreds of people who line up daily in the civilian affairs office gain satisfaction.

"I want to know when my son can come through the bridge," asked one man trying to arrange permission for relatives working in the Gulf to visit during the summer holidays.

The official on the other side of the counter was sympathetic, but powerless. "You have to try again after the Israeli election."

We hope the closure will be lifted then and your son can come in."

In Israel, the election contest between Mr. Peres and his right-wing challenger, Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, is widely seen as a referendum on the peace process and a Netanyahu victory is expected to deal a serious blow to Palestinian aspirations to independence.

But Palestinian officials appear relatively unconcerned over the outcome of the vote. "We signed the peace agreements with the Israeli government, not with this or that party," said Mr. Asfour. "The Israeli side is using the election as an excuse to avoid their commitments in peace process. What we hope is that next week we will see the end of the excuse."

Arabs anxiously await Israeli election

Combined agency dispatches NICOSIA — ARAB COUNTRIES were Tuesday anxiously awaiting the outcome of Israeli elections, hoping on the eve of the poll that the result would be a victory for peace but differing over which party should emerge triumphant.

"The Israeli elections are an internal affair but the Arab League hopes that the peace trend will win," said Arab League spokesman Talaat Hamad.

He refrained from backing any candidate, mentioning neither outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the leader of the ruling Labour Party, nor his right-wing challenger for the premiership, Likud Chief Benjamin Netanyahu.

In an unprecedented move Morocco's King Hassan II, whose voice carries sway with the hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews of Moroccan origin, said a Peres victory was "indispensable" for the future of the peace process.

But Egypt and the Palestinians have only discreetly given their backing to Peres, with Egypt's Ambassador to

Israel Mohammad Bassiuni saying Labour was more "flexible" on peace.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said in a newspaper interview that a Likud victory would "probably" delay the peace process.

Syria and Lebanon, which have made little progress in their peace talks launched in October 1991 with Israel, have said, however, there is little to choose between the two parties.

The official daily Tishreen said the election campaign showed that the Labour and the Likud were trying to win votes by raising expansionist slogans rather than calling for peace.

"The Israeli society has not yet matured to accept peace with Arabs. The proof is ... that the two major parties in their efforts to win votes are clinging to aggressive and expansionist ideas rather than propagating a just peace," Tishreen said.

"The leadership of labour felt that slogans in which it stressed the importance of ... concessions on the Golan to achieve just peace and the need for a political solution in

South Lebanon did not meet the Israeli mood."

Tishreen said these slogans "turned into a dangerous charge which the Likud used to pull down the Labour and in turn the Labour moved to deny the 'charge of peace' by halting talks with Syria and attacking South Lebanon."

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said on Monday the policy of Mr. Netanyahu could end the whole peace process in the Middle East. He said the Likud calls not to withdraw from the Golan were "war" calls.

Mr. Netanyahu said in an interview published in Israel's Haaretz daily if elected prime minister on Wednesday, he would refuse to discuss the future of Jerusalem with Palestinians despite an Israeli agreement to do so.

Arab countries prefer to see their peace partner Peres in control after Wednesday's election.

However, many Arab countries are still seething after Mr. Peres ordered Israel's 17-day assault last

month against Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon, which left 174 dead, mainly civilians.

The conflict radicalised public opinion in Lebanon, and Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez recently noted that Mr. Netanyahu had "abandoned some extremist views" accusing Mr. Peres of going in the opposite direction.

The deputy leader of the Hizbollah, Sheikh Naim Kassem, on Monday urged supporters to be alert saying "whoever wins the elections our people will still be under the threat of Israeli aggression."

In the Gulf, Saudi Arabia has said it is unconcerned by the outcome of the poll, while Sultan Qaboos of Oman called on Arabs to encourage Israel to make peace, without any direct reference to the vote.

Jordan, which became only the second Arab country to sign peace with Israel in 1994, has meanwhile carefully avoided being drawn into the debate.

Israeli parties mobilise voters for tight contest

OR YEHUDA (AFP) — With every vote likely to count in Israel's tight election contest, Labour and Likud are waging a logistics battle to make sure their supporters reach the polling stations on Wednesday.

The balloting may be decided by which party is better organised on election day, activists from both camps said at the close of a two-month campaign.

"At the last minute you don't persuade people, you bring them to the polls and hope that they will vote for you," said Itzik Shmueli, a deputy mayor in this traditional Likud stronghold east of Tel Aviv who is working for the right-wing list led by Likud.

Israel's 3.9 million voters will for the first time directly elect their prime minister, choosing between Likud Party challenger Benjamin Netanyahu and Labour Party incumbent Shimon Peres.

They will also vote for a party, with Labour and Likud certain to be the biggest blocs.

An opinion poll published in the Yediot Aharanot newspaper after a televised debate on Sunday pointed to a neck-and-neck race, giving Mr. Peres only a 49.5-47.1 per cent lead over Mr. Netanyahu.

A close adviser of Mr. Peres, speaking on condition of anonymity, predicted the poll would be "very tight, a question of thousands of votes."

Throughout Israel, Labour,

Likud and smaller parties have rented cars and organised drivers to transport their supporters to polling stations.

"We do not have a set of wheels left to rent," said Dorit Benayon of the Eldan car rental agency in Jerusalem.

Ultra-orthodox Jewish parties have gone a step further, offering cheap flights from New York and other Western cities to their supporters abroad eligible to vote.

In Or Yehuda, where only 23 per cent of voters chose Labour at the last election in 1992, compared to 42 per cent for Likud, the race remains heated because Israel's elections are carried out on a national basis.

That makes every vote, everywhere count in a close contest.

The Likud support here and in hundreds of similar strongholds stems largely from the town's ethnicity and history. It started as a tent camp in the 1950s for poor Jewish immigrants from Iraq and other Arab countries.

Many of them faulted the then-dominant Labour for discriminating against them in favour of Jews from European countries and never forgave it, instead identifying with Likud firebrand Menachem Begin.

Mr. Netanyahu clearly scored well in his debate with Mr. Peres, striking a chord with a stress on security issues but also giving the impression he would not cripple the peace process with the Palestinians.

Canadian army major sentenced to 3 months over Somalia killings

OTTAWA (AFP) — A Canadian army major was sentenced Monday to three months in prison and dismissed from the armed forces after he was found guilty of allowing soldiers under his command to use force against prisoners during a U.N. mission in Somalia in 1993. The Ottawa martial appeals court ruling against Tony Seward followed a first trial in 1994 in which the major only received a reprimand. Judge Barry Strayer said the reprimand did not reflect "the serious circumstances in which this relatively senior officer

deliberately pronounced what was an ambiguous, and a dangerously ambiguous order." Seward had told soldiers under his command they should not hesitate to use force if intruders sought to enter their camp at Belet Huen in Somalia. A young Somali civilian was tortured to death by two men under Seward's command in March 1993. A total of three Somali civilians died in early 1993 allegedly at the hands of members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, who were deployed to help restore order to the war-torn country.

'Repentant' Muslim militants seek in vain to rejoin society in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — "Repentant" Muslim militants released from prison often find themselves shunned, without a job and tempted to return to the radical groups that once gave them a home.

"For us the future is bleak. We lost our work when we were arrested and employers refuse to take us back for fear of problems with the authorities," Mohammad, 30, told AFP.

Mohammad was one of 311 former Islamic militants whom authorities deemed "repentant" and released from prison in April to mark the feast of Al Adha.

In the past two years, the Interior Ministry has released some 2,150 "repentants" after organizing sessions in prison with theologians from the leading Sunni Muslim institution Al Azhar to teach them "true Islam."

Mohammad, who asked that his full name not be given, said he was arrested in 1992 in a police sweep of the Cairo slum of Shubra for links with the Gamaa Islamiyah, the main militant faction waging an armed anti-government campaign.

"But it was from contact with Gamaa members in prison that I really got to know the fundamentalists' ideas. I picked them up, but then repented," he said.

"Now I'm unemployed, and I'm worried I'll go back to the militants for financial reasons, because my aged father's pension is not enough," said Mohammad, who holds a degree in social work.

Mohammad's former cellmate, Said, 25, had a similar experience after being arrested during a raid on the 'Ain Shams neighbourhood of Cairo in 1993 only a few

months after receiving an arts degree.

Accused of working with outlawed groups while in university, he was released a year later.

"Since then I've been looking for work. But I have no work experience, because of my prison term. Now I'm one of hundreds of graduates hanging out in cafes waiting for a government position," he said.

"What do we do after the 200 Egyptian pounds (\$60) given to us upon release runs out?" asked another former prisoner.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali said "ordered ministry officials to intervene with authorities to ensure jobs" for those released, according to the ministry.

But the former prisoners accuse the government, especially the Fund for Social Development created to help low-income

Egyptians start up small businesses, of "not allowing reintegration into society."

That is in contrast to the militant groups themselves, which "repentants" say look after their members, providing funds, and are generally successful in keeping them in the ranks.

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) says some 16,700 are in prison under emergency laws without charge, almost all in connection to militant violence. The Interior Ministry insists they number 10,000 at most.

Nearly 8,000 of the prisoners are still held despite orders by the judiciary for their release, the EOHR says.

The confrontation between police and militants has left more than 1,020 dead since 1992.

Necropolis of ancient Fatimid rulers uncovered in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — A French archaeologist, after a decade's search, has uncovered the Necropolis of the Fatimids, the Shiite dynasty which ruled over medieval Cairo at the height of its grandeur.

Roland-Pierre Gayraud, excavating in the southern Cairo district of Qarafa Al Kubra since 1985, discovered the tombs containing the families of Egypt's Fatimid rulers and the remains of their ancestors brought in from North Africa.

Pillaged in the 11th century, stripped by fertilizer sellers in the early 20th century and now hurried

under Cairo's urban sprawl, the site has never previously been studied, Mr. Gayraud told AFP.

"An amateur archaeologist in the 1930s found a foundation stone there with the name Taghrid, a concubine of the first Fatimid caliph in Egypt, Al Muizz," Mr. Gayraud said.

Taghrid was the mother of Al Aziz Billah, whose 20-year caliphate solidified power in Egypt for the Fatimids, a dynasty originally from Tunisia, which ruled from Cairo from 969 to 1171.

The Fatimid caliphs themselves were buried further north in a graveyard

destroyed by later Mamluk rulers to create the giant Khan Al Khalili souk, now Cairo's biggest tourist haazar.

Their family graves at Qarafa Al Kubra, arranged amid mosques and baths, are exceptionally large, the largest mausoleum measuring 1,400 square metres.

"All the roads were paved with stone, there were numerous gardens, a carefully maintained water system and we have found a number of decorative stuccos," Mr. Gayraud said.

Around 200 skeletons have been found so far and will be sent to Marseille in southern France for DNA

testing to determine their lineage, he said.

Although under Islam bodies are buried only in a shroud, a number of wooden coffins have been found, including collective ones, some of which contained both men and women.

Mysteries surround the remains. An old woman found in one tomb could be Taghrid. In another, 17 women are buried along with unborn fetuses. An unexplained pot found elsewhere contains goat vetebrs and piles of hair.

Several bodies have been found in elaborate "tiraz," fabrics reserved only for the caliphs, who could give

them as gifts to favoured subjects.

One man with a beard dyed red with henna — a mark of honour still found in Saudi Arabia — was found wrapped in three tiraz, one with the name "Al Muizz".

In the main mausoleum, Mr. Gayraud found a collection of bodies, "part of the remains of ancestors brought in from Tunisia."

This year he found a coffin with six legs, "as if to be transported", containing three bodies in tiraz embroidered with gold and silver.

His excavations have also uncovered remains from

Fustat, the initial Cairo settlement built by Arabs Muslim invaders who first conquered Egypt in 640.

Along with tent stakes and mud brick houses from Fustat, Gayraud found "the most ancient mosque site known in Egypt", dating back to the mid-8th century, an uncompleted site including a finished prayer niche.

Fustat was burned to the ground in 750 when the Abbasid dynasty came to power. The area became a cemetery and dump for the garbage-collectors of Cairo in following centuries.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:30 The Flintstones
16:00 Dinnamys
16:30 Bill Nye the Science Guy
17:00 The Secret World of Alex Mack
17:30 News Flash
17:50 Children's Programme - Le Chat
18:00 Perche
18:30 Scat - Magret El La Vicelle
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine - Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy - Evgene Strelou
20:00 World Net
20:25 Orama - Chancer EP.II
21:10 Hunter
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10 Alif

PRAYER TIMES

03:55 Fajr
06:27 Sunrise (Doha)
12:33 Dhuhr
16:13 Asr
19:39 Maghrib
21:11 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Swedish Tel: 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel: 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel: 634598
Church of the Annunciation Tel: 637481
De la Salle Church Tel: 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel: 623541
Anglican Church Tel: 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel: 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel: 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel: 771751
Armenian International Church Tel: 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824526
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel: 858457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel: 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel: 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel: 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel: 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 14/29
Aqaba 21/37
Djebel 13/32
Jordan Valley 18/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26 Aqaba 35 Humidity readings: Amman 51 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Halasch 819220
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shikha 752405
Dr. Rabi Sukkar 856497
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih 700104
Firas pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 679336
Al Salem pharmacy 623072
Nairouth pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637440
Nairouth pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakr 276852
Al Quds pharmacy ()
ZARQA:
Dr. Saleh Al Safarini 987565
Khafich pharmacy 984411

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 943402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 608800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Information Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010250
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Ahdal Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 774111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 640100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815415
Electric Power 836381
RJ Flight Information 08-53230
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53230

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 8181352
Khafich Maternity, J. Amn 6442816
Alfith Maternity, J. Amn.

Jabal Amman Maternity 6424112
Mallus, J. Amman 630140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 6612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6616466
Italian, Al-Muhajirin 777103
Al-Bashir, J. Asrafieh 7751126
Army, Marka 8916115
Oman Alia Hospital 6224050
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Spinal Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)986732
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hina Modern Hospital (09)989990
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272225
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital (02)274700
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (06)53200. 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 Laraca (RJ)
10:30 Damascus (RJ)
17:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
17:40 Istanbul (RJ)
19:00 London, Geneva (RJ)
19:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
19:35 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
19:45 Casablanca, Madrid (RJ)
20:10 Rome (RJ)
00:20 J. Beirut (RJ)
01:10 Cairo (RJ)
04:25 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:50 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Sanaa (JY)
12:15 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
14:30 Tunis (TU)
16:20 Algiers (AH)
20:40 London, Beirut (BA)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
22:35 Laraca (CY)
23:30 Amsterdam (KL)
23:40 Athens (OA)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:50 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Sanaa (JY)
12:15 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
14:30 Tunis (TU)
16:20 Algiers (AH)
20:40 London, Beirut (BA)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
22:35 Laraca (CY)
23:30 Amsterdam (KL)
23:40 Athens (OA)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:45 Aqaba, Rome (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
12:15 Istanbul (RJ)
20:10 Colombo (RJ)
20:30 Cairo (MS)
21:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:10 Cairo (RJ)
21:25 New Delhi (RJ)
22:15 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:30 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
23:40 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:00 Amsterdam (KL)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
11:00 Cairo (MS)
11:40 Cairo (MS)
13:45 Sanaa (JY)
14:15 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (SV)
15:30 Tunis (TU)
17:20 Sharjah (AH)
22:30 Laraca (CY)
00:20 Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights (Marka Airport)
10:00 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Amman (OIAA) (RW)
17:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m., every Monday
Arr. Damascus 3:00 p.m., every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m., every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m., every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 600/500
Banana (Mulkatan) 520/500
Banana (imported) 750/500
Cabbage 100/60
Carrot 200/140
Cauliflower 200/140
Cucumber (small) 200/140
Eggplant 240/150
Garlic 500/400
Garlic (green) 250/150
Lemon 600/400
Marrow (large) 170/120
Marrow (small) 220/170
Mulkhiah 220/160
Onion (dry) 110/80
Orange 350/250
Peas 200/140
Pepper (hot) 700/500
Pepper (sweet) 250/160
Potato 230/140
String Bean 450/320
Tomato 340/170
Watermelon 170/150



HRH Princess Basma Tuesday speaks to a group of diplomatic wives who are preparing for the annual charity bazaar to benefit the Um Al Hussein Orphanage (Petra photo)

Princess Basma reviews bazaar plans with diplomatic spouses

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma Tuesday met with the wives of heads of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions in Jordan in the course of preparations for the annual bazaar which the diplomatic community holds in Amman to benefit the Um Al Hussein Orphanage.

In an address to the audience, the Princess voiced Jordan's deep appreciation of the embassies' contributions through the annual bazaar over the past 30 years.

She said the contributions have helped to promote the care and services offered by the orphanage to the children, who receive education and vocational training free of charge.

Speakers among the wives of envoys expressed their keenness on continuing their participation in the annual

bazaar which is dedicated to humanitarian causes and which promotes the work of the orphanage.

A statement from the office of Princess Basma said this year's event will be organised on October 4 at Al Hussein Youth City.

At the meeting with Princess Basma were the wives of 35 Arab and foreign diplomats serving in Jordan.

Arab League envoys in Amman to help restore solidarity

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation of Arab countries' permanent representatives to the Arab League in Cairo Tuesday called on Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and discussed pan-Arab issues, the Middle East peace process and means of restoring Arab solidarity.

In a statement following the meeting Moroccan Ambassador to the Arab League Abdul Latif Muncil said "Jordan took the initiative in inviting the Arab League envoys to tour the Arab states in a bid to help restore solidarity among them."

"The envoys' meetings with government officials in the various Arab states and their study of their views on pan-Arab and domestic affairs are certain to help restore this solidarity," said Mr. Muncil.

"We learnt from the Prime Minister about Jordan's views on the situation

in the Arab World and we are happy to make the visit which allowed us to witness progress in the Kingdom," added Mr. Muncil.

He said the tour is bound to help give momentum to rallying of Arab efforts towards the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive peace.

Jordanian Ambassador to the Arab League Nayef Qadi, who accompanied the envoys to Amman, said the delegation members expressed hope that the Arab leaders will hold a summit meeting, noting that the visit itself was a sign that differences among the Arab countries are disappearing.

He expressed hope that the mini summit of the leaders of Palestine, Egypt and Jordan in Amman in the first week of June will lead to an expanded meeting by Arab leaders.

Minister says land use to be defined in fight against desertification

AMMAN (Petra) — In a bid to fight off desertification in Jordan, the government plans to define land use in different areas and rehabilitate arid regions by increasing vegetation and planting more forests, said Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tbeisbat Tuesday.

Addressing the opening session of a seminar on the importance of public awareness in the battle against desertification, the minister said Al Azraq Wildlife Reserve is one of the targeted areas for rehabilitation.

The government is creating pasture lands and wildlife reserves and reintroducing animals and plants that were threatened with extinction in Jordan, said Dr. Tbeisbat.

Man receives 7.5 years for manslaughter of divorced sister

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court Tuesday sentenced a 29-year-old man to seven and a half years in prison for killing his divorced sister in the Zarqa refugee camp on Nov. 11, 1995.

Samir Mohammad, who was charged with the premeditated murder of his sister Madina, 28, first received a 15-year sentence, but the sentence was reduced to half because the convict's family dropped charges against their son.

The court also decided to amend the charges of premeditated murder to manslaughter because the defendant committed the crime in "a fit of fury."

According to the prosecution, the defendant's relatives informed him that his sister, who was divorced six months before the murder, was having an affair and that there were tape recordings to support their allegations.

Without listening to the tapes, the defendant went to his father's house and stabbed his sister to death,

the court said adding that investigations later proved that there was nothing unusual or incriminating in the tapes.

The court rejected a plea by the defendant's attorney that it was an honour crime because, according to the court, the defendant was always suspicious of his sister's actions and "was advising her to change her behaviour."

Also Tuesday the Criminal Court upheld a conviction on two people sentenced to death after the Court of Cassation urged a review of one of the two sentences issued in a double murder case which occurred in Jabal Marikh in November 1994.

The higher court last month upheld one death sentence against Jamal Najjar, 23, who was found guilty of the premeditated murder of his father, Mahmud Najjar, 61, but asked the court for the retrial of Mohammad Adib, 23, who was sentenced to death by the criminal court after being found guilty of murdering Najjar's sister-in-law, Sawwan, 23.

Najar was also convicted of attempting to murder his

sister-in-law, Sawwan, and Adib was found guilty for complicity in the murder of Mohammad Najjar.

According to the prosecution, a friend of Jamal Najjar informed him that his sister-in-law had had an affair with another man and that his father knew about it and was protecting his daughter-in-law.

In his confession to the authorities, Najjar said he killed his father and attempted to kill Sawwan to clean his family's honour.

But the prosecution also charged that Najjar plotted to kill his father for financial reasons.

The prosecution said that Adib agreed to participate in the murders because Sawwan had once rejected his proposal of marriage.

Court documents said that both men plotted to kill Mahmud Najjar and his daughter-in-law as the prosecution claimed that the two defendants purchased a gun on Nov. 1, a week before the murders were committed.

The Criminal Court's new ruling will be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

Prince Hassan stresses need to rehabilitate regional economies in meeting with European delegation

Delegation head urges pan-Arab cooperation in face of political, economic developments

By Ghaila Aml
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday stressed the need for rehabilitating the economies of the region through a comprehensive programme and through adopting new norms of economic dealings, especially with regards to small scale farming and businesses.

Prince Hassan's remarks, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, came during a meeting with a European Parliament delegation which arrived in Jordan Saturday on the second leg of a three-country tour of the region which also includes Syria and Lebanon.

Prince Hassan discussed

with the delegation issues of common interests, mainly the Jordanian European association agreement which is expected to be finalised in mid July and, which Prince Hassan said, will be based on the Mashreq agreement which was concluded in the 1970s.

In an interview with the Jordan Times earlier in the day, head of the delegation Ingo Friedrich urged Arab countries to start a cooperation campaign among them in order to face the rapid political and economic changes in the region more effectively.

Mr. Friedrich said the difficulties encountered by the Arab countries should prompt them to coordinate in order to maintain political and economic stability in the region.

This was a recommendation, Mr. Friedrich said, he delivered at a meeting Monday to the Jordanian Parliament and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

"The Arab countries should start to cooperate in a small group in line with the policy carried out by the European countries after World War II," Mr. Friedrich, who is heading a nine-member delegation on a fact finding mission to the region, told the Jordan Times.

As a result of what he called the "successful" visit to Jordan, Mr. Friedrich said the delegation on relations with the Mashreq countries and the Gulf states, will speak in favour



of more European investment in the region when he returns home.

"We found that it is worthwhile to go on with investments (in the region) after the peace process, as peace is irreversible," he added.

However, he said, the Europeans should start implementing a common foreign policy among the 15 member-states to play a more effective role in the Middle East.

"We should do our homework to find a common foreign policy... we expect as Europeans to speak in one voice," Mr. Friedrich said.

The European delegation invited a group of the Jordanian Parliament to visit the European Parliament in Brussels. Mr. Friedrich said, adding that the European Parliament will follow up on its mission through organising more visits to the area with one already planned for Egypt next year.

Specialist sees tourism as road to consolidating peace...

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Interaction and familiarity with people is one of the key means of consolidating peace, and one of the basic avenues to do so is through tourism, an issue very much relevant to Jordan and the Middle East in general, says an American expert.

Louis J. D'Amore, founder and president of the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism, bases his argument on "the universality of the common interest" of people to get to know other cultures, ways of life and people.

"Once people meet other face to face, they come to recognise the other as fellow human beings, with the same hopes and aspirations," said Mr. D'Amore. This in turn leads to "better understanding of each

other" and such understanding influences political decision, said the expert on the fringes of a seminar in Amman on Jordanian economy, organised by Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation and Philadelphia University.

Mr. D'Amore said the U.S. civil war — "the fiercest conflict in recent times" — was one of the best examples of how bitter rivalry turned to friendship and understanding among people as a result of interaction.

Similarly, he argued, the end of the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union stemmed largely from increased exchange of visits by the peoples of the two countries in the 70s and early 80s which in turn led to influencing political leaderships into accepting con-

ciliation.

How does that relate to the Middle East, particularly that the wounds of the Arab-Israeli conflict turn too deep for interaction among people, who include displaced and refugees facing a bleak future?

"It is difficult," Mr. D'Amore concedes. Political impediments are very much evident in the Middle East for the concept of "peace through tourism." And there are no quick remedies to address the impediments either.

But in the meantime those who do not have an immediate political stake could take the lead, he said. For instance, "farm tourism" — where small farming families set aside one or two rooms for tourists — is a viable option in the Jordan Valley, he said.

Such an approach, which

is highly attractive to many tourists who shun typical tourism involving five-star hotels, beaches and nightlife, will also lead to better understanding among the hosts and guests, he asserted.

There is no denying that the developments in the Middle East peace process have led to an increase in tourism into the region, he said.

In 1995, tourism into the Middle East as a region went up by 25 per cent and Jordan led the list with a 35 per cent increase, said Mr. D'Amore, who has served as an international consultant for more than 25 years to the travel and tourism industry.

According to Mr. D'Amore, tourism offers the largest returns and incentives in terms of creating business and employment opportunities and this advantage is widely recog-

nised all over the world.

In essence, he said, business and employment opportunities lead to improved living standards among people and indirectly contribute to removing or at least reducing the bitterness among people left behind by conflicts.

"Sustainable tourism" was the topic that Mr. D'Amore presented at the seminar on Jordanian economy.

Mr. D'Amore has completed a project identifying opportunities for "socially and environmentally responsible tourism" in seven countries of the Caribbean and Central America.

The American expert's experience also covers the areas of social impact assessment, environment, public participation, community development, social planning, cultural development and conflict

...others say sector has potential, but ask if 'we are ready'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prospects for the tourism sector: "promising but challenging." This is how four experts on tourism and economy characterised the sector in Jordan.

World tourism registered 567 million tourists in 1995, said Minister of Tourism Saleh Irshaidat, addressing an assembly of sectoral experts Monday.

"These tourists accounted for \$373 billion in receipts. "We might feel a little disappointed because we in the Middle East had only a limited share of these numbers," he said.

"The region as a whole accounted for only \$6.7 billion, and Jordan only \$723 million with 1,037,000 tourists."

"Only this," he said, adding that "despite that we have the potential to meet all necessary requirements of tourism and we also have enough attractions." "We could potentially reach at least \$2 bil-

lion in receipts according to some figures, but the question is 'are we ready to do that?'"

Jordan lacks a unified tourism policy to begin with, Dr. Irshaidat said, which is currently being debated between the government and the private sector, he added. But the more pressing problem is that the physical infrastructure to support tourism growth does not exist.

"We were a bit taken aback by the demand on infrastructure and services as tourism to Jordan started to grow," he said, "therefore, all places need an upgrade of services."

A serious setback to introducing adequate infrastructure, he said, is a lack of available funding.

"For example, the cost of installing a sewerage system in Petra and surrounding areas like Tayybeh is \$30 million," he said. "So the government is very concerned about how we can finance these things. We are looking for loans,

etc."

Dr. Irshaidat spoke during an evening session of a four-day conference entitled, "The Jordanian Economy in its Regional and International Framework: A Future Outlook." The conference was organised by Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation and Philadelphia University.

Dr. Habes Samawi, a lecturer on tourism at the University of Jordan concurred with the minister, saying, "If we look at some of our most popular, most visited sites, we can't help but be disappointed."

"When I go to Iraq al Emir, I am discouraged because I see tourist buses unloading their passengers onto smaller buses because the area cannot accommodate larger ones. When we try to talk by telephone to Wadi Rum, we can't. Some sites don't have water. Tourism can't wait for these steps."

"Tourism can become a high-value-added branch

of the growing service sector, providing the labour market with sophisticated and reasonably remunerated jobs," said Manfred Haak, director of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation.

"On the other hand, tourism can also happen as a temporary wave of uncontrolled growth, focusing on mass tourism, which would rapidly lay waste to Jordan's attractiveness as a tourism destination."

"This is the time to decide whether to use Jordan's natural resources as a source of long-term prosperity or to sell out for a cheap quick profit," he said. "I plead for the first option."

Jordan should follow four principles to ensure the healthy development of the sector, Mr. Haak said, which would ensure that the greatest number of people benefit from the sector without risk to Jordan's natural and cultural attractions.

Natural and cultural

attractions should be sold for as much as the market will bear, he said, and should be recognised and maintained as unique, irreplaceable resources. Occupations in related services should be redefined to promote small and medium sized enterprises in all areas of tourism, and value-added services of the tourism industry such as planning, contracting and product design should be retained under Jordanian management.

All three said that the development of the industry should be distributed throughout the Kingdom, with less emphasis given to Amman and Aqaba.

"The government should give incentives outside of Amman," said Dr. Samawi. "Eighty per cent of our hotel capacity is Aqaba and Amman, and 70 per cent of our services are in these two cities."

The desert palaces, he pointed out, don't really benefit from tourism, but they could.

JNRCS suggests Amman as regional relief supply warehouse site

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society Mohammad Hadid Tuesday urged the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world to establish a regional warehouse in Amman to store relief supplies which can be transported rapidly to various areas in this region in times of need.

Addressing the opening session of a three-day conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies from nine Arab and foreign nations which regularly donate funds for humanitarian assistance, Dr. Hadid

said the peoples of this region have opted for peace as a way of life, and therefore the international community and various world donor nations and organisations are called on to help the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies carry out their mission, particularly in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine so that peace can be comprehensive and just.

"By helping these countries the donor nations and organisations can help the local and regional societies fight off poverty and unemployment,

offer better social and health services, promote international humanitarian law and enhance the concept of human rights," said Dr. Hadid who is also vice chairman of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

"We should benefit from the lessons of the past in confronting and dealing with the consequences of man-made disasters like the Gulf Crisis of 1990, and the war in Lebanon which led to the displacement of thousands of families," added Dr. Hadid.

WHAT IS GOING ON

EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL

* Greek film "Jaguar" and documentary film "Les Enfants de Lumiere" respectively at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Prince Hassan auditorium, University of Jordan.

FILM

* "Richard III" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Jordan, Where to? — Its Past and Future Regional Role" by Ibrahim Izziddin, at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography exhibition by Youssef Al Allan at Zaitounah University, until June 5.

10 hurt as police break up Albanian election protest

TIRANA (AFP) — At least 10 people were injured Tuesday morning as police wielding clubs and tear gas canisters broke up a demonstration in central Tirana by opponents of Albanian President Sali Berisha.

Among those hurt were Social Democratic Party leader Skender Gjenushi and head of the Socialist Party, Servet Pellumbi, who was then forcibly taken away by police, according to reporters in Tirana's main square.

Several other opposition leaders were also detained. They were released after being questioned by police for an hour. At a press conference afterwards, they said Mr. Berisha was leading "a dictatorship."

The violence erupted a day after Mr. Berisha's ruling Democratic Party proclaimed itself the winner of weekend legislative elections, a vote which opposition parties claim was rigged.

"Here is the democracy that has just been installed in Albania by Berisha," proclaimed Mr. Gjenushi, his eyes smarting from tear gas.

Opposition parties had called on Albanians to protest at what they say are widespread election irregularities, in defiance of a warning by the Interior Ministry that demonstrations were prohibited.

Wearing helmets and bullet-proof vests and armed with shields, police

moved in on several hundred protesters in the central square of Tirana.

While police cars, their sirens wailing, surrounded the square, officers clubbed passers-by and broke up a group of curious onlookers on the steps of the square. A journalist with a Yugoslav daily newspaper was beaten up and police smashed up equipment belonging to a Spanish photographer.

Two members of the Democratic Alliance, Gramoz Pasko, who defected in 1993 from the Democratic Party, he helped found, and Arben Imami, were arrested.

Tension also spread to provinces where a Socialist Party sympathiser suffered a knife attack at the hands of a Democratic Party supporter in the southern town of Gjirokastra Monday evening.

Azen Hajdaria, a former student leader and now member of the Democratic Party, defended the actions of the police against what he called an illegal demonstration.

He said the protests had been organised by "a group of criminals and former agents of Sigurimi (the Communist regime's secret police) who refuse to recognise the results of the election."

Definitive results from the vote have not yet been made public.

The opposition parties, who pulled out of the vote three hours before polls

closed, demanded that the election be annulled and a new one be held in its place "in democratic conditions."

On Monday, the Democratic Party celebrated its proclaimed election victory in the same central Tirana square where Mr. Berisha declared that that "communism has lost forever in Albania."

Meanwhile a European member of OSCE-led election observers in Albania said Tuesday the body was pulling out before a second round of voting, indicating that they had found irregularities in the first round.

"The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe last night officially declared its mission in Albania over," the European observer told Reuters.

The second round of voting is scheduled for June 2.

The OSCE has yet to issue its official statement.

The Democratic Party benefited from the legal position of power they had, and they shamelessly abused it," the observer from a key European state said.

"We noticed a whole series of irregularities which left us with a feeling that wasn't good, as though we had been misused as observers to provide a figleaf for a result which we cannot back as it stands," he said.



A triumphant Albanian President Sali Berisha is embraced by a young boy while flashing his trademark "V" sign to more than 50,000 supporters of his ruling Democratic Party, who gathered Monday on Tirana's Skanderbeg Square to celebrate victory in Sunday's general elections (Reuters photo)

Black box tape shows U.S. Valujet crash passengers lacked oxygen

WASHINGTON (R) — Passengers aboard Valujet Flight 592 apparently had trouble getting oxygen after an on-board fire broke out before the crash that killed 110 people, investigators said Monday based on initial analysis of the recently recovered cockpit voice recorder.

After about six minutes in the air, "there were verbal indications from the cockpit that there was fire in the passenger cabin," said Robert Francis, vice chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

"There was also an indication from the cabin that there were problems obtaining oxygen. Now that is the limit of what we have at the moment," he told a news conference.

Mr. Francis said the 30-minute audio tape itself was in "good condition" and may hold vital clues to the flight's last moments, including what may have caused the fire and how the crew reacted.

The cockpit voice recorder was found Sunday, two weeks after the DC-9 plunged nose first into the swampy Florida Everglades on May 11, killing all 110 people aboard.

Mr. Francis said it was unclear whether the tape-recorded reference to oxygen problems referred to a hitch with emergency drop-down masks or to fire sucking up air in the passenger cabin. The fire was hot, enough to melt aluminum seat frames, or at least 500 degrees Fahrenheit (468 Celsius) to cause that kind of damage, according to investigators.

Mr. Francis said an expert panel drawn

from government and industry would try to determine the meaning of the reference to an oxygen shortage, picked up by the cockpit recorder as it was shouted by someone from the passenger cabin.

Investigators hope the recorder will show what role, if any, a load of volatile oxygen generators and inflated airline tires may have played in the aircraft's forward cargo hold, just behind the cockpit.

Earlier in the day, safety board officials said they were still eager to locate the 27-year-old plane's circuit breaker panel to check for a possible electrical problem.

"We don't want to rule out, obviously, the possibility that there could have been some electrical problems as well," Mr. Francis said in a morning television interview.

After about six minutes of what appeared to be routine operation in the air, the cockpit door apparently opened when the fire inside the cabin was reported, although the emergency situation was not announced over the aircraft's intercom, he said.

He said deciphering the audio tape, which captured about 30 minutes of communication starting with pre-flight taxiing at Miami International Airport, was "extraordinarily difficult" because it was hard to make out what was said. "I would say that this is not going to be a question of hours, but of days," he said.

The cockpit voice recorder was brought Sunday night to the safety board's Washington headquarters, where it was being studied by the expert group.

Ukraine president appoints new premier

KIEV (AFP) — President Leonid Kuchma Tuesday appointed Pavel Lazarenko as Ukraine's new prime minister, replacing Yevgeni Marchuk who was dismissed, though the change drew a mixed response from politicians here.

The promotion of Mr. Lazarenko, who was first deputy prime minister, was reported by Interfax News Agency.

Mr. Kuchma dismissed Mr. Marchuk Monday saying he had made a sham of economic reform in this rich but struggling republic and was more interested in his personal image.

Mr. Lazarenko became a deputy in the Ukrainian parliament in July 1994 and was previously presidential representative in the industrial Dnepropetrovsk re-

gion. Born in 1953, Mr. Lazarenko first worked in agriculture and was elected head of a collective farm at the age of 24.

Mr. Kuchma said Monday that Mr. Marchuk, in office for just under a year, had failed to do "stable and efficient work as head of the government."

"The process of structural reform has barely started, and as a result the economic crisis is deepening, causing delays in payment of salaries and a variety of social benefits," he added.

"Rather than day-to-day work, the head of the government has concentrated his efforts on creating a personal political image," he added.

The statement said that a backlog in unpaid wages

and subsidies now stood at \$355 million.

Ukraine's failure to meet its goals for cutting inflation, paying for Russian gas and approving a budget according to a certain timetable had prompted the International Monetary Fund in December 1995 to suspend financial assistance.

In April, the IMF relented and granted Kiev a \$900 million stand-by loan, but said it would undergo monthly checks of its economic performance as a condition for disbursement of the various tranches of the aid.

Meanwhile in parliament Tuesday, news of Mr. Marchuk's ouster was greeted with mixed reaction.

50 bodies float to surface from Tanzanian ferry

MWANZA, Tanzania (R) — Fifty bodies floated to the surface of Lake Victoria Tuesday after divers broke into the third-class passenger section of a sunken Tanzanian ferry.

As work to retrieve more than 500 dead from the ferry Bukoba entered a second week, an international team of divers cut through a plate left in place overnight to reach third class.

"We are in radio contact with the site and they've cut into the third class cabin. So far 50 bodies have come up to the surface," said International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) spokesman Omar Valdimarsson in the Tanzanian port of Mwanza.

Rescue officials said they expected to find perhaps 300 bodies in the third class compartment of the ferry in 27 metres of water six miles northwest of Mwanza Port.

The first 50 to surface Tuesday brought the total number of bodies recovered since the ferry sank a week ago to 344, according to the IFRC, and 341 according to local authorities.

Officials of the state-run Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), owners and operators of the Bukoba on Africa's largest lake, have acknowledged the death toll could be as high as 800.

"Waiting gets harder. That's all I can say," said survivor Florian Medard, 20, waiting in Mwanza to identify the body of his mother who was sleeping in a cabin when the Bukoba capsized.

But floating and decomposition after a week in the water means the bodies cannot be visually identified. Police and relatives rely on any documents found on the corpses to identify them.

Those which are not identified at Mwanza's main football stadium are buried by soldiers in a mass grave near the town.

As part of a police inquiry into the sinking, East Africa's worst shipping disaster, a senior criminal investigator arrived in Mwanza from the capital Dar Es Salaam to supervise the probe.

Captain Jumanne Rume, the master of the Bukoba, was discharged from a Mwanza hospital and taken away by police.

India's 1st Hindu nationalist government collapses

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee abruptly resigned Tuesday, just 13 days after taking office as the leader of India's first Hindu nationalist government.

Moments before a vote on a confidence motion his party was certain to lose, a haggard-looking Vajpayee stunned parliament by announcing that he planned to offer his resignation to President Shankar Dayal Sharma.

The 69-year-old Vajpayee, who became India's 10th prime minister on May 16, then drove to the downtown Presidential Palace and formally submitted his resignation at a 25-minute closed-door meeting with the head of state.

"My resignation has been accepted by the president," he told reporters after the meeting. "I have been asked to continue as caretaker prime minister until further arrangements are made."

"I am happy I have regained my freedom," added Mr. Vajpayee, whose Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) finished as the single largest group from general elections in April and May that produced a fractured parliament.

The BJP and its four small allies have 194 seats in the 545-member Lok Sabha, the lower house, and Mr. Vajpayee's announcement preempted a humiliating defeat on the floor of the house.

The combined opposition has more than 300 MPs and the next government is expected to be formed in the next couple of days by a coalition of about a dozen centrist parties known as the United Front.

"I don't regret my decision to resign," Mr. Vajpayee said. "My party will meet tonight to chalk out the future agenda of the BJP."

Immediately after Vajpayee's resignation announcement, parliament Speaker P.A. Sangma adjourned the Lok Sabha, which had been convened to enable the BJP to face a vote of confidence before the presidential deadline of May 31.

In a nearly 90-minute speech repeatedly interrupted by opposition MPs, Mr. Vajpayee defended his decision to form a government and lashed out at the opposition parties ranged against him.

He warned before abruptly resigning that this country of 930 million people was headed for political instability.

With just 13 days in office, Mr. Vajpayee, one of India's most respected politicians, headed the country's shortest-lived government. The previous government with the briefest tenure lasted for 117 days in 1990-91.

Mr. Vajpayee said the United Front alliance would fail to provide a stable

administration. "What kind of government you will form, what kind of policies you will have, I don't know," mocked Mr. Vajpayee.

The United Front, which has more than 100 MPs, has been promised crucial legislative support by the Communists, who have 53 MPs, and former Premier P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party, the second largest group with 136 MPs.

Mr. Vajpayee charged that the front would be at the mercy of the Congress.

"I can't see the (next) government sticking to too long," he said. "You will have to run to the Congress for everything."

Front leaders were jubilant over the BJP government's fall, and said they were eagerly awaiting an invitation from President Sharma to form a government.

"We are evolving a minimum common programme involving all parties," said Sharad Yadav of the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), whose H.D. Deve Gowda has been chosen by the front partners as their prime minister designate.

"We will form the government in the next three days," said Arjun Singh, a front supporter, adding: "Vajpayee knew he had no majority. That is why he submitted his resignation."

Mr. Vajpayee, the only moderate leader in the aggressively Hindu-nationalist BJP, in his speech reiterated his commitment to secular values and said that he was being wrongly accused of promoting theocracy.

The BJP's maiden rise to power led to an unprecedented polarisation in the political spectrum, and nearly all opposition parties joined hands to topple it from day one, inviting charges of post-election opportunism.

Opposition leaders led a spirited attack on the BJP and its brazen Hindu posturing during the two-day debate on the motion of confidence which began Monday.

A BJP leader warned that the party's exit would lead to fresh elections.

"The Congress will back the United Front government for a while and then ditch it," BJP Vice-President Jana Krishnamurthy told AFP.

"Fresh elections are a certainty. ... Maybe even before the end of this year."

Mr. Deve Gowda Tuesday staked a claim to form India's next government after Mr. Vajpayee's abrupt resignation.

Mr. Deve Gowda handed over two letters to President Shankar Dayal Sharma at the presidential palace some two hours after Mr. Vajpayee submitted the resignation of his government.

Hillary Clinton to visit Romania in July

BUCHAREST (R) — U.S. first lady Hillary Clinton is to visit Romania in July as part of a Central and Eastern European tour, diplomatic sources said Tuesday. Mrs. Clinton, accompanied by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeline Albright, is due in Bucharest on July 5. The sources said Mrs. Clinton would spend at least 24 hours in Romania and visit humanitarian projects, see the problems of Bucharest street children and meet President Ion Iliescu and other officials. Mrs. Clinton's tour is also expected to take in the Baltic republics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

Welsh monks break silence with TV commercial

LONDON (R) — Sixteen Cistercian monks, facing ruin from oil pollution and mad cow disease, have broken their vows of silence to advertise the joys of their remote Welsh island home on television. "We are forced to accept a certain level of worldliness if we wish to survive on our island," said the abbot, Brother Robert. "It seems that television and advertising are very much of today's world." The monks financed their monastery on the tiny island of Caldey with visits from 1,500 tourists a year who enjoyed the boat trip over from the mainland and then bought farm produce. But disaster struck in February when the Sea Empress tanker ran aground off the coast, spilling thousands of tonnes of oil. They then tried to sell some of their prize herd of 100 cattle only to be hit by the scare over mad cow disease. Now the monks have drawn up a series of television advertisements to try and draw the visitors back. "We have a strict rule of silence — but we also have to live in the modern world," Brother Robert said.

Florence declares war on pigeons

FLORENCE (R) — Officials in the historic Italian city of Florence declared war on pigeons Monday. Refuse collectors will be equipped with nets and dispatched to round up 200 pigeons a day from the city's estimated 150,000 flock. Diseased birds will be killed and the rest disinfectant and set free, said Florence's Health Councilor Marco Geddes Da Filicaia, who recently launched a failed campaign to round up stray cats. Officials say the pigeons foul statues and buildings with their droppings and are a danger to public health. Phase two begins next year when officials will sneak up on nesting pigeons and replace their eggs with plaster copies.

Plunge of S. African rand leads to bizarre fraud

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Three South Africans posing as Liberian royalty were arrested for trying to spend blackened paper they said would be revealed as U.S. dollars if a chicken was slaughtered and its blood drunk. Captain Anton Smit of the police Fraud Unit told a news conference Monday the three men replied to an advertisement by a Johannesburg businessman wishing to sell a building for 1.5 million rand (\$344,000). The suspects, who posed as a Liberian prince and his two chiefs, told the man they had \$1.5 million which they had had to blacken to get it out of war-torn Liberia. "The suspects said before any of the dollars could be shown, the police informer (businessman) had to go through a ritual for which a live chicken and alcohol were needed," Capt. Smit said.



Some fishermen look at the skeleton of a creature they described as a dragon in Kuala Kedah, Malaysia, Monday. Fishermen took half an hour to lift the 7.5-metre skeleton aboard a fishing trawler which was found in 54-metre waters off the northern island of Langkawi (Reuters photo)

Huge sea creature's skeleton draws thousands of Malaysians

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Thousands of curious Malaysians have flocked to a jetty in northern Kedah state to view a huge unidentified skeleton described by the fishermen who caught it as a dragon carcass.

The four fishermen who brought in the skeleton Sunday said they had pulled the three-metre-long remains in with a fishing net, despite initial trepidation.

After they were convinced the creature caught in their net was dead, the fishermen said it took them about 45 minutes to bring up the creature.

"We were shocked by what we saw," said fisherman Lim Yow Sam, 40, who regards himself as no stranger to bizarre catches. "I have netted the decomposed body of a man

before," Mr. Lim added.

The skeleton had a large gaping jaw with big teeth, and a long backbone with chunks of rotting flesh still hanging from the vertebra.

"It has to be a dragon ... just look at the shape of the head and bone structure," Mr. Lim was quoted saying by the New Straits Times daily.

Officials from the Fisheries Department have since taken possession of the mysterious skeleton, saying they would analyse it.

The Malaysian Fisheries Research Institute Director Ibrahim Salleh speculated from photographs of the skeleton that it may be the remains of a killer whale.

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Burmese opposition leader and Nobel Peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi (centre), answers reporter's question during a press conference Tuesday at her Rangoon house following the end of a three-day congress of the National League for Democracy party. The NLD passed several resolutions that will likely infuriate the military government (Reuters photo)

Burma's NLD challenges army with resolutions

RANGOON (Agencies) — Burma's revitalised democracy movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi wrapped up a controversial congress Tuesday with several resolutions likely to infuriate the country's military rulers.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) resolutions, making good on a promise to step up the fight for democracy, came as the military government followed up its mass detentions of NLD supporters by launching public rallies and attacks on Ms. Suu Kyi.

Between 300 and 400 NLD members, seemingly oblivious to how the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) may react, broke into fighting cheers and chants as they listened to rallying music at the end of the three-day congress.

Their most controversial resolution was likely to be one giving the NLD leadership the power to draft a new constitution for Burma.

"The conference authorised the Executive Committee to draw up a constitution for the future union of Burma. We must start to work as soon as we can. It doesn't take long to draw up a constitution if you have the will," Ms. Suu Kyi told reporters.

The NLD angered the SLORC in November when it pulled out of a government-organised convention drafting guidelines of a new constitution. It said the convention, meeting intermittently since January 1993, did not represent the will of the people.

The SLORC sees the convention as the backbone of its plans for the country and has ordered delegates to enshrine a "leading role" for the military in politics.

Ms. Suu Kyi said the NLD congress called for a future Burma that would be ruled by a parliament of elected representatives.

"Under the constitution being drafted by the government's convention the 'leading role' of the armed forces would be backed up by a guaranteed large portion of appointed seats in parliament.

"We want the army to be an honourable institution responsible for the defence of the nation and of democratic principles," Ms. Suu Kyi said of the role of the military in a future democracy.

When asked if the NLD realised its resolutions were likely to infuriate the SLORC, Ms. Suu Kyi said the military was everything she and her party did as confrontational.

"There is nothing in the law that says you have no right to draw up a constitution that you think would be for the good of the country," she said.

"They regard everything we do as confrontational. Anything that is not in line with their politics is regarded as confrontational," she said.

On Tuesday, the government lashed out at Ms. Suu Kyi and the NLD in the state-run media, calling them "public enemies" who should be "crushed" for trying to destabilise the country.

In rallies held Monday and set to continue Tuesday and the rest of the week, tens of thousands of people chanted slogans calling Ms. Suu Kyi and the NLD "traitors" and "enemies", state media reported.

Government-organised rallies are often staged in Burma with the military forcing people to attend, diplomats say.

Ms. Suu Kyi, who was released last July after six years of house arrest, said the NLD also passed resolutions urging the SLORC to release all political prisoners and to free 261 NLD members it detained last week in a bid to scuttle the congress.

The SLORC said it has not arrested the NLD members but only detained them for questioning temporarily in an effort to avoid anarchy which it said could have resulted from the Congress.

NLD Deputy Secretary General Tin Oo told reporters at least nine of the detained NLD members had now been charged by the government under sweeping security laws.

Meanwhile the Philippines Tuesday called for restraint by Burma's ruling junta and opposition forces, warning that a showdown could undermine stability in South East Asia.

The foreign Department comment was the first from a member of the seven-nation Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) about the renewed campaign by Ms. Suu Kyi and the detention of 262 of her supporters.

Manila urged both sides to "step up their efforts at national reconciliation in order to avoid the already tense situation from destabilising the situation in Myanmar (Burma)."

The Foreign Department statement "also expressed concern over its possible disruptive effect on the peace and stability in the South East Asian region."

Ms. Suu Kyi has criticised the policy of engagement with the Rangoon junta carried out by ASEAN, which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN eventually hopes to integrate Burma.

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Yeltsin promises peace to Chechnya, praises troops

GROZNY, Russia (R) — President Boris Yeltsin took his reelection campaign to rebel Chechnya Tuesday, promising peace to the region devastated by nearly 18 months of war and praising his troops for the way they had fought.

"I have come to the land of Chechnya with peace," Interfax News Agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying in his first words on arrival at the heavily guarded Severnyy Airport in the regional capital Grozny.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, running for a second term in a June 16 election against strong competition from Communist Gennady Zyuganov, paid his long-promised visit to Chechnya after striking a peace deal with rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev Monday.

After a brief stay in Grozny, the president returned to the Russian military base of Mozdok in the north Caucasus, ITAR-TASS news agency reported. He was due to fly back to Moscow from Mozdok.

Mr. Yeltsin has described the peace deal, which calls for an end to fighting from midnight Friday (2000 GMT) and an exchange of prisoners, as a historic event opening the way to peace in Chechnya.

But, keen to win the hearts of the military, many of whom had been angered by what they saw as incompetent direction of the military campaign, Mr. Yeltsin said a breakthrough would not have been possible without their efforts.

"You have finally won," Interfax quoted him as telling servicemen of the Grozny-based 205th Motorised Rifle Brigade.

"We have defeated the mutinous regime of (Dzhokhar) Dudayev," Mr. Yeltsin added, referring to the former separatist leader killed last month in a rocket attack.

Mr. Yeltsin acknowledged that the campaign, in which more than 30,000 people died, had been marked by many mistakes. But he argued that his decision to send in troops to snub Chechnya's independence bid in December 1994 had been justified.

"There was a coup here. Power had been seized by separatists," Interfax quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying in Grozny.

"In carrying out the task, we could not avoid making some grave mistakes. I am not trying to fend off blame from myself."

Two days before the Moscow talks between Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Yandarbiyev Russian troops seized what they described as the last rebel stronghold in Chechnya — the village of Bamut in western Chechnya and a former Soviet missile base nearby.

Some military experts say the fall of Bamut after more than a year of resistance was a heavy blow to separatist forces and made rebels leaders more inclined to start peace talks.

The one-page peace deal signed in Moscow skirted the issue of whether Chechnya would remain part of Russia or become independent. An attempt to negotiate peace last year stumbled on reluctance by both parties to compromise on this point.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Medvedev said the future status of Chechnya was not raised in the Moscow talks which focused on military issues.

But, on his way to Chechnya, Mr. Yeltsin made clear

Moscow was still reluctant even to consider Chechen independence.

"We should demonstrate that the Chechen Republic is in Russia and nowhere else," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying. He said this was one of the key aims of his visit.

In Grozny, Mr. Yeltsin discussed reconstruction of Chechnya with government officials and conferred on the issue over the telephone with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, in Moscow.

Mr. Yeltsin told the public meeting in Grozny Tuesday that tough military action would be taken if the Chechen rebels violated the ceasefire accord.

"The divided hardcore opposition groups will not give up their weapons immediately," Interfax News Agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

"Any attempts to resume terrorist and criminal activities will meet with the toughest measures in response," Mr. Yeltsin said.

"I have come to Chechen soil bringing peace," Mr. Yeltsin said in Grozny.

"All of Chechnya, all of Russia wants this Chechen knot to be untied and long-awaited peace to arrive as soon as possible."

Mr. Yeltsin said the rebels' resistance "has been practically broken — the road to restoring peace and constitutional legality in Chechnya is open."

But he vowed that there would be no repetition of "the grave error of last year, and the (Chechen) fighters will not be allowed to recover after heavy defeats."

"The politicians don't have the right to trip up the Russian army again, or trip up peaceful citizens, who cannot be hostages to poor decisions."

In Washington, the White House welcomed Tuesday the ceasefire agreement reached by Mr. Yeltsin and the leader of Chechen separatist rebels, but noted it remained to be seen if the deal is implemented.

"The United States welcomes the apparent agreement between the Russian Federation and rebel leader (Zelimkhan) Yandarbiyev," White House spokesman Michael McCurry told reporters.

"We will be watching closely to see that the agreement is implemented, that the ceasefire takes effect Friday and that hostilities end in a conflict which has gone on tragically for too long," he added.

Mr. McCurry demurred when asked if the accord would prove an election boost for Mr. Yeltsin, as the Kremlin hopes. "It's up to the Russian people," he said.

In Paris, a spokesman for French Foreign Minister Jacques Rummelhardt said Mr. Yeltsin's visit to Chechnya Tuesday should contribute to a halt in hostilities between Moscow and separatist rebels.

"For us, it is important that the dialogue which has been reestablished at the highest level continue. President Yeltsin's trip is in keeping with this dialogue."

France hailed the ceasefire accord between Russia and the Chechen rebels, saying that it could "constitute an important step towards political resolution of the issue."

Sri Lankan rebels kill 4 civilians, 5 soldiers

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas Tuesday blew up a tractor, killing four civilians in Sri Lanka's northern peninsula of Jaffna where five soldiers were also killed in rebel attacks, officials said.

Guns of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ambushed the tractor carrying Tamil farmers in the Vadamarachchi sector of the peninsula Tuesday, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

It said the attack may have been meant for security forces.

Tiger guerrillas also killed a group of soldiers at Iyakachchi, also in the peninsula, killing three of them, official sources said.

They said two more troops were gunned down elsewhere in the peninsula while two guerrillas were also killed in separate attacks overnight Monday.

Meanwhile, the LTTE's clandestine Voice of Tigers radio said Tuesday that they had killed at least 33 troops in sporadic attacks across the peninsula in the past three days, a claim denied by the army.

Security forces wrested complete control over Jaffna earlier this month but sporadic hit-and-run attacks have become routine in the battle-weary region where the government has launched a major campaign to resettle civilians.

The Tigers are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated. More than 50,000 people have died in fighting since 1972.

Also Tuesday, a senior minister said that lasting peace in Sri Lanka, where the government is consolidating its spectacular military success over Tamil rebels, will depend on the main opposition.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga is determined to implement a radical power-sharing plan and end the conflict. Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mangala Samaraweera said.

"We feel that we could go for a vote on the political package before the end of the year," Mr. Samaraweera told the Foreign Correspondents' Association here late Monday.

The government was "quietly optimistic" of peace after the LTTE were driven out of Jaffna where civil rule was now being established, he said.

The minister, a close confidant of Mrs. Kumaratunga and a staunch peace campaigner, said they ruled out talks with the LTTE which abruptly pulled out of negotiations to resume their guerrilla war in April last year.

He said there was no scope for any third party foreign mediation to reopen a dialogue with the Tigers but welcomed efforts to persuade the main opposition United National Party (UNP) to support the peace drive.

The government's ethnic peace plan which seeks to turn Sri Lanka into a federal state in all but name requires a two-thirds majority parliament before it can be put before the people at a referendum.

However, since Mrs. Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) has only a slender one-seat majority in the 225-member National Assembly, it requires crucial support from the UNP.

Mr. Samaraweera, a member of the majority Sinhalese community, said they hoped that the opposition would support the devolution plan which envisages greater autonomy to minority Tamils in order to establish a permanent peace.

UNP legislators have been issuing conflicting signals about their support to the devolution proposal raising fears among Tamil legislators that a select committee process set up to push the peace plan may be collapsing.

N. Ireland Unionists' fear feuding will undercut vote

BELFAST (AFP) — Intermine Protestant squabbling in the runup to Thursday's Northern Ireland elections was threatening Tuesday to weaken the Unionist vote for delegations to all-party peace talks that begin on June 10.

With the elections 48 hours away, the campaign to name a 110-member forum from which participants to the historic peace round-table will come was provoking harsh exchanges among the 11 Unionist parties standing candidates.

The largest of them, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), had been a key proponent of elections.

After holding up the Ulster peace process for months with the demand that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) surrender its arms and explosives before talks, the UUP demanded a vote.

The Protestants, in the majority in Ulster, have always favoured elections to decide key questions, while the minority Republicans, backed by Dublin, have opposed them.

To loud protests from Dublin and the Sinn Fein political wing of the IRA, London granted the election demand in order, as one British official put it, "to get rid of the excuse of decommissioning."

But UUP leader David Trimble now fears that with so many Unionist parties standing candidates Thursday, the vote could be hopelessly diluted to the benefit of the nationalist Republicans.

"There are only two or three pan-nationalist parties, not 11 of them," he said. "They will be able to concentrate their votes."

There was also the risk that fragmentation among the Unionists could work to the advantage of such Unionist extremist parties as the Reverend Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

It could also, said observers, work to the advantage of the moderate Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the province's second largest political party.

The UUP has shown little affection for Rev. Paisley, whose rhetoric, according to Mr. Trimble's deputy, John Taylor, "could damage the pro-union voice in Northern Ireland at these talks."

"There is a great danger of a larger number of pan-nationalist candidates getting elected than ought to get elected," said Taylor.

Mr. Trimble blamed an "unholy alliance" between Rev. Paisley and SDLP leader John Hume for the so-called list system being used in Thursday's vote, a system which the UUP sees as a "trap."

"The form of the election which has been imposed on Northern Ireland is a trap designed to fragment Unionists and to allow the SDLP to appear equal or larger than any Unionist party," said the UUP's Ken Maginnis.

The UUP's concerns were evident at a meeting here Monday night with the unveiling of a new campaign poster bearing a crumbling British flag with the slogan, "division and weakness, or unity and force."

In general elections in 1992, locals in 1993 and European elections in 1994, the SDLP never did better than second place, with the UUP and DUP swinging between first and third. Between 10 and 15 per cent of the Northern Ireland electorate traditionally wavers between the hardline and moderate.

Nationalists, both Sinn Fein and the more moderate SDLP, oppose the elections and have agreed to participate with reluctance.

Sinn Fein has been trying to turn the vote to its advantage by playing on the Anglo-Irish prerequisite of a new IRA ceasefire for its admission to all-party talks.

The IRA broke a 17-month ceasefire last February with a series of London bomb attacks.

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Israel's moment of truth

AS ISRAEL goes to the polls today to choose a new parliament and prime minister, there are increasing signs that those elections have not been nor will they be for some time to come a strictly domestic affair. This is based on the assumption that the electoral contest between right and left, religious and secular will largely determine the course of the peace process in the Middle East and probably also the region's future. The stakes for various parties and countries, regionally and internationally, are obviously high. We have observed Washington expressing support for Prime Minister Shimon Peres' bid for reelection, albeit in a subtle way, after investing so heavily in the ongoing peace effort. Peres is expected by not only the Americans to persist in seeking accommodation with the Arab side till full regional peace is attained. Other major powers also have not shied from manifesting a growing preference for Labour out of fear that a Likud victory could be detrimental to the universal quest for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement. By and large, the Arab World is implicitly backing Peres as can be read in the decision of the overwhelming majority of the Israeli Arab voters to support his candidacy.

However the results of those elections might turn out to be, the point remains that they are not unique in the sense that the international community has decided to "meddle" or take sides in them. The upcoming presidential election in Russia has likewise attracted wide international interest and prompted major powers such as the U.S. and Germany to openly campaign in favour of the incumbent, Boris Yeltsin. The concern here is that a return to the communist rule would jeopardise everything the West has been busy cultivating on the international scene for the past several years. Preferences for who might win the November elections in the U.S. and next year in Britain are all added signs that indeed the world is becoming a smaller electoral village.

For us in the Middle East, the Israeli elections are most important because they likely will set the stage for progress or setback in the continued search for a permanent and just peace. Which actually explains why most of us have developed a clear interest in their outcome, although we should be extremely hesitant as whether to endorse one party over another or appear to be indifferent altogether.

The best message to send to the Israeli people on this crucial day is to tell them that the choice is indeed theirs. And the choice is really one between those who want to make peace a reality on the ground or the others who just want to drag their feet and procrastinate.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily attacked Iran for its adamant stand with regard to the Arab lands it occupies in the Gulf region, describing the Iranian occupation as worse than Israel's occupation of Palestinian and other Arab countries' lands. Hosni Ayesh said that a listener tuning in to Tehran Radio about the islands issue would realise that the Iranian claims over these islands resemble Israel's claims over the lands it is now occupying. Indeed, Iran's occupation is worse because to Iran's case, certain Arab and Muslim groups support its occupation and expansionist moves in the Arab World, while in the case of Israel all the Arabs are in agreement on the need for ending its occupation of all Arab lands, continued the writer. He said Iran's occupation and its drive to spread its hegemony to Arab countries reminds the Arabs of the situation when the various non-Arab Islamic states had in the past succeeded to bring about the downfall of the Arab Islamic empire and subsequently led to the disintegration of the Arab entity, paving the ground for colonial rule.

IN HIS television debate with the leader of the opposition Likud Party, Shimon Peres pledged to never allow the establishment of a Palestine state or allow Jerusalem to be partitioned, said a writer for Al Dustour Tuesday. Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Likud, tried to win the favour of the Israeli voters by promising to seek a "genuine peace" with Israel's Arab neighbours, noted Mohammad Kawash. What concerns the Arabs, in general, and the Palestinians, in particular, is the implementation of the Oslo agreements which call for a total Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian lands, but with his statement, Mr. Peres is undermining the concept of peace as agreed on with the Palestine leadership, added the writer. He said Arabs realise that the Likud Party leader's promises of peace are nothing but empty words chosen to win voters' favour and therefore neither Mr. Peres nor Mr. Netanyahu are inclined towards genuine peace based on justice. Both leaders, said the writer, agree on one thing: to win the voters' support and secure that their respective parties will carry out programmes that can only serve the interests of the Jewish state.

Washington Watch

Israel's elections — 'not the perfect choice for Arabs, but a choice nevertheless'

By Dr. James Zogby

THIS YEAR'S Israeli election, like the peace process itself, could have been a dramatic and defining milestone in Middle East history. Tragic events and weak leaders have combined to lessen the significance of both.

What Israel could have been debating in this election were two diametrically opposed views of the future of the Middle East. What the Israeli people could have received from the Labour Party was a vision of peace so attractive that they would have been compelled to support it. But the weak Labour leadership and the trauma caused by terrorist bombings have reshaped this election campaign and blurred the lines between the Labour and Likud parties and their candidates.

Weak leadership is nothing new to the Labour Party. For two and half years, unable to forge a majority support base in the country, Labour has squeezed the life out of the peace process. Fearful of the reaction of Israel's right-wing political parties and refusing to confront the extremist settler movement, Labour stalled on negotiations with the Palestinians, extorted less than fair concessions out of their weaker negotiating partners and, even after completing agreements, refused to implement many of them (e.g., the economic protocols, the safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, promised prison reforms and redeployment from Hebron, to name just a few).

It was this same weak leadership and susceptibility to pressure from their right-wing opposition that rendered Labour extraordinarily vulnerable to the deplorable tactics of suicide bombers.

Labour's policy of economic closure of the West Bank and Gaza, for example, has been driven more by pressure from Likud than by an urgency to save the peace process. The punishment imposed on Palestinians is collective without regard to guilt or innocence, severe and excessive in its effects and impact. Labour has insisted that the Palestinians be

partners in the crackdown on terror, but they have not begun to treat the Palestinians as partners when it comes to pursuing other important aspects of the peace process — such as the economic benefits of peace.

In the wake of the recent suicide bombings, Labour's election campaign has sought to blur the lines between their position and that of Likud. Shimon Peres has played up security issues, promised financial benefits to the settler movement, pledged an expansion of existing settlements, committed himself to maintaining a united greater Jerusalem under sole Israeli sovereignty, insisted that Israel would maintain the Jordan River as its "security border," pledged to oppose the right of Palestinian refugees to return, and would submit any agreement with the Palestinians to a national referendum.

It is ironic that the Israeli public's support for peace and realisation of the benefits of peace (Israel is today, wealthier, more secure and more recognised than at any time in its history) has been most felt by Likud. Benjamin Netanyahu has been forced to promise that he would accept "what has so far been agreed on with the Palestinians."

While promising to add new settlements (as opposed to Peres' position of only expanding existing settlements), and not recognise Palestinian self-determination in the final status negotiations, Netanyahu has been forced to recognise the popularity of "peace for most Israelis. He therefore proposed a reconvening of the Madrid conference in order to keep the peace process alive.

If Labour's drift to the right was not enough to disturb Arabs and confuse even Israeli voters, Peres' massive assault on Lebanon delivered a critical blow. Witnessing the savagery of the bombings, the deaths of innocent civilians and the widespread and deliberate destruction of Lebanon's economic infrastructure brought many to wonder

what this "peace" was all about. And even in this instance, it was weakness that drove the Labour government's policy.

For a month, Hizbollah, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and the South Lebanon Army exchanged attacks within the Israeli-occupied sector of Lebanon. While the IDF understood that Hizbollah's attacks were legitimate under the 1993 understanding Israel had agreed to with Lebanon, Peres was under increasing pressure from Likud to act. It was only when Israel attacked civilians outside the "security zone" that Hizbollah began its rocket attacks on northern Israel; and it was then that Israel responded with its destructive and disproportionate assault.

It may be argued by some Israelis and their supporters that Peres' responses to the terror bombings and the situation in Lebanon were necessary to save his electoral chances. But what has been lost as a result of these actions were the perceptual differences between his promised policy of peace and the policy of the Likud.

What Israel's voters will be asked to judge this week is not the actual campaign rhetoric of Labour and Likud (they are too close at times to discern fundamental differences), or the security policies each would pursue (they have, here too, demarcated an equally hard line). If Israel wants peace, and it appears that a majority of the public still does, they will choose Labour based on a hope that Labour will return to the path of peace after May 29. They will vote for a vague hope and not for a compelling vision or a clearly defined difference.

The problem this poses for the Israeli electorate is especially critical for Israel's Arab minority. For years they languished under a kind of internal occupation. They were Arab citizens of the Jewish state, with some rights but second-class citizenship. For many years they were denied even the right to join political parties or to form their own parties.

Gradually, they have emerged to the point where, today, they have become the key swing vote in a national election.

Surely, it is ironic that Israel, the powerful Jewish state, will likely have its election decided by Arab voters.

The figures are striking. There are 3.9 million voters in Israel, of whom 540,000 are Israeli Arabs — a total of 14 per cent of the electorate! To show how critical their vote can be, one need only look at the following:

Before the assault on Lebanon, about 80 per cent of the Arab voters were with Peres in the polls, but after the assault Arab support fell to 50 per cent — a swing of some 4 per cent of the total vote. In recent weeks Peres' margin over Netanyahu has rarely been greater than 4 per cent.

So important is the Arab vote that one analyst likened Peres to an American white Democrat from the South. It is a fact that in recent years no white southern Democrat has won the majority of the white vote; when a white southern Democrat wins it is because the black vote provided the margin of victory.

Lately, Peres has recognised the power of this Arab vote. At a recent campaign stop in an Arab city, Peres did what he had not done anywhere else — he apologised for the assault on Lebanon, saying (in part): "Believe me, I feel pain for every woman and child (who died in the assault)." He also promised to work for equality between Arabs and Jews in Israel and consider the appointment of an Arab to his cabinet.

Not only is the Arab vote important in the vote for prime minister, but in the Knesset elections as well. Most commentators have failed to note that in recent polling neither Labour nor Likud with their respective allies appear to be able to secure enough seats in this election for the Knesset majority of 61 needed to form a government.

Labour and its allies appear poised to win 51 (of 120) seats while Likud and its allies get about 49.

Regarding the garden

By Ali Kassay

One of the most impressive and worthy efforts undertaken to beautify Amman and make it a fit place for heroes to live in, is the campaign to build a park in every nook and cranny of our capital city. These beautiful gardens, which now dot Amman, adorn it with gay floral colours during the blooming season, and with picturesque rockery during the bleak but short winter months.

In addition to their aesthetic value, parks, or gardens if you prefer, make a worthy contribution to an important national cause, that of reinforcing the excellent ties that exist between Jordan and brotherly Arab states. You see, flower beds and occasional lawns, such as they are, need the constant and loving care of a fleet of gardeners. Jordanians, curiously enough, prefer to complain about unemployment rather than to do honest work, so people who do not share this aversion to labour have to be imported. Thus the parks of Amman make a worthy contribution to the fight against unemployment in brotherly Arab countries.

The penchant for planting trees and bushes everywhere also makes a contribution to Jordan's international trade. By planting trees and hedges in carefully selected spots, namely, at intersections and at the breaks in the islands separating the two sides of a highway, we succeed in totally obscuring all incoming traffic. The net effect of this is an increase in the number of collisions, which boosts the sale of car spare parts by an impressive amount. This, of course is added to the net sum on the balance of trade of importing the plants themselves.

Which brings me to an additional benefit that accrues from Amman's beautiful parks. The varieties of plants which are imported and planted nowadays appear to be very active producers of pollen which fills the air, mixes itself with the dust that is a constant feature of Amman, and the insecticides that are sprayed regularly, then it lodges itself in the respiratory passages of people who, should they suffer from a tendency to hay fever, no matter how slight, will rush to the chemist for antihistamine. This, doubtless, is in fulfillment of our duty as good citizens to support our national industries, particularly the drugs industry.

But then we come to the normal usage of parks all over the world: People go to them to have a walk, they sit in the park and have their lunch, and children tend to play there, in safety from traffic. Well, unfortunately, the parks in Amman are thoroughly unsuitable for these purposes. The nearest that is adequate is on the road to the airport, which puts it beyond the reach of anyone who does not have a motor vehicle. Within the bounds of the metropolis parks are built on slopes too steep for a casual perambulation: they do not have benches on which to sit, because park benches are all placed between the Second and Third circles two weeks before the MENA summit and have been left there since; and the parks are too small for children to play in, unless they happen to be keenly interested in mountaineering.

So, where should children go for a game of football or a run around? Well, where they have always gone. In the street, of course. This has the added advantage of sharpening their survival instincts as they have to dodge the traffic while they chase the ball, or each other. In Amman we place high value on the slogan: "Be alert, young man!"

Israeli elections — two sides of the same coin?

By Farida Salfiti

TODAY ISRAELIS will go to the ballot box to cast their votes for the next premier, and thus determine the shape and the speed of the next stage of the peace process. But regardless of which of the "worst" men, Shimon Peres or Benjamin Netanyahu, becomes Israel's next prime minister, Peres has to many ways already won. He has put in place the peace process and Oslo has become irreversible. Netanyahu and the Likud Party will have to work within the structure and the framework already laid out by Labour. In fact, the Likud of today is left of what Labour was four years ago. Today, Likud will recognise and negotiate with the PLO, and will honour the agreements already signed. Likud has been encapsulated by Labour's policies of the past four years and has no option but to accept them, and to work within their framework. In that context, is there really any difference between who wins the elections?

The Americans, the Palestinian Authority and many Arab leaders fear that should Netanyahu win the elections the peace process will be struck a mighty blow. Peres is needed, they believe, to accelerate the speed of the

process, and to bring it back on track after a lull. They have all joined the Israeli elections campaign, firmly placing their weight behind Peres. His recent visits to Qatar and Oman are all part of the campaign trail. The U.S. portrays Peres as the angel of peace, and has supported him in an unprecedented way. It has extended every necessary gesture and move to ensure that their "partner" to the Middle East will continue to reign over their foremost ally. Labour has always appeared to be favoured, by the Arabs and the U.S., as a negotiating partner. But a closer look at this presumption might prove otherwise. For the sake of keeping the Labour government in power, Rabin and later Peres have been allowed far more leeway to crack down hard on the Palestinians — all in the name of preserving the tenuous peace process.

Under Labour, the Israeli government was allowed, in the name of peace and security, to impose the closures, which have continued intermittently and for various periods of time to strangle the Palestinian economy. The most recent closure has been imposed ostensibly in the name of security, but more plausibly as an effort to ensure against outbreaks of violence which would threaten Peres' election bid. In

other words, the Palestinian population has been held hostage and used as a tool by the Peres government in its elections campaign. Closures are imposed against the Palestinians, and offensives are waged against Lebanon, to help cement Peres' image as tough on security. It has resulted in tremendous suffering as thousands of Palestinians are unable to go to their workplace, translating into tremendous financial losses. Losses the Palestinians can ill afford. As Palestinians observe the elections, they are wondering whether they should be used as pawns in internal Israeli affairs. They are wondering whether the hoped-for end (the success of Peres), justifies such harsh means, and whether it is actually worth it.

The Labour government signed the peace agreement, but Palestinians are quick to point out that it was the Labour government that first began the settlement drive in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was that same government which imposed the bone-breaking policy during the intifada under the orders of the Nobel Peace Prize winner Yitzhak Rabin, and it was the first to impose the closures on the territories. Today, Likud makes no secret about its policy of expanding the settlements should

it come to power. It is stated clearly in its political platform. But a less known fact is that settlement building increased at a tremendous pace since the signing of the Declaration of Principles, quietly creating facts on the ground that will jeopardise the outcome of the final status negotiations, violating the spirit of the agreement. And that is under the so-called party of peace — Labour.

In fact, in many ways, the Labour government has been able to get away with much more in its crackdown on the Palestinians and in its violations of the peace agreement, because of its image as the "lesser of two evils" — a better option than Likud. Do not restrain it, do not criticise it, give it free reign to do anything in order to stay in power, to retain Israel support for the peace process, and to portray itself as hard bent simultaneously and equally on the two tracks of peace and security for Israelis. The U.S. granted its full support to Peres' recent "Grapes of Wrath" offensive into Lebanon. Not a word was said criticising the damaging effects the prolonged closures are having on Palestinian economic life. Where is all that economic prosperity promised?

Rather than having a weak Peres in power, restricted in his capacity to manoeuvre on the peace front by a strong opposition, it might well be better to have a weak Netanyahu who will have a strong opposition peace camp to answer to. Likud is of the firm belief that it can unilaterally impose its own version of peace on the Palestinians. Labour may not think so, but its actions speak otherwise. For Labour has done no better than impose its own version of peace on the Palestinians. A sure recipe for ensuring a short life to the peace process. The question Palestinians are asking themselves today is: Wouldn't it be better to have an Israeli leader, say Netanyahu, who has made very clear what he believes, and the policies he will pursue, than a leader who is artful at marketing a peace package that does not offer anything better than what Likud envisions? Under Netanyahu, the Palestinians know exactly what to expect. They are not deceived by nice-sounding peace clichés which they are hungry to believe. Perhaps it is time to face up to realities.

The writer is managing editor of the Paris-based newsletter Issues-Perspectives on Middle East and World Affairs. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Israeli court halts work on PNA official's home

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli regional court has ordered a halt to construction of a house for Ahmad Qouriea, speaker of the Palestinian legislative council, in a suburb of Jerusalem, city officials said Tuesday.

City spokesman Hagai Elias said the municipality had filed a complaint with police charging that Mr. Qouriea, a key architect of the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements and close advisor to Yasser Arafat, had not obtained a construction permit for the home being built in Abu Dis.

Abu Dis lies inside the municipal limits of Jerusalem although part of the village falls under the administration of the Palestinian National Authority.

Two months ago an Israeli court ordered Mr. Qouriea, also known as Abu Alaa, to halt the construction work, but he ignored the ruling, Mr. Elias said.

Police ignored repeated requests from city authorities to intervene, saying they would not have the necessary manpower until after Wednesday's national elections, Mr. Elias charged.

The city authority is headed by Ehud Olmert, a senior figure in the right-wing Likud Party which has focused its election campaign on charges that Prime Minister Shimon Peres plans to hand over East Jerusalem to the PNA if he wins Wednesday's polls.

Mr. Peres has repeatedly rejected the allegations, saying a "united Jerusalem" would always remain Israel's capital.

The future of Jerusalem is among the issues to be resolved in negotiations on a permanent peace settlement for the Palestinians which began on May 5 and are due to resume following the elections.

In an interview published Tuesday, Likud leader and prime ministerial candidate Benjamin Netanyahu said he would not honour commitments by the outgoing Labour Party to include Jerusalem in the final status talks.

In an interview with the daily Haaretz published on Tuesday, he said: "It is a clause on their agenda and not ours. If they raise the issue, I will drop it. I will not respect any agreement regarding Jerusalem."

'Volunteer' Iraqi force gets new responsibility

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A "volunteer" force run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday has been tasked with defending Iraq from "any conspiracy or foreign attack" under a parliamentary law announced on Tuesday.

The law, submitted by the president's office and adopted after two days of debate, outlines the role and objectives of the estimated 60,000 fedayeen (guerrillas) in the corps that was formed in 1994, the official press said.

The corps "shares responsibility for the defence of Iraq... against any conspiracy of foreign attack," it said.

Baghdad set up the corps when the United States increased its military presence in the Gulf in response to Iraqi troops movements near the Kuwaiti border in October 1994.

At the time 20 Iraqi youths who had joined the force were shown on state television devouring a wolf, uncooked, during a training session at a military camp.

Experts call for legal changes

(Continued from page 12)

In addition, the recommendations called for a code of honour for journalists.

Committee members told reporters during the press conference that the recommendations will be forwarded to parliament and the concerned ministries for study.

Participants, who included government officials and employees in all local media sectors, called during the seminar for upgrading media performance and praising the achievements of Jordan in this regard.

The meeting was organised by the Jordanian Islamic Centre for Studies and Information (JICSI) in cooperation with the Amman Municipality, focused on nine working papers dealing with the Press and Publications Law and the Jordan Press Association law.

JPA takes 'case' to speakers

(Continued from page 1)

Muasher to discuss the issue. The meeting might take place Thursday or Saturday when a new group of JPA members will be sworn in before the minister.

Dr. Muasher confirmed that he would soon meet with the JPA board to settle the issue, but said he believed that the draft law was not a source of controversy with the association.

"I do not think that any points in the law are controversial as much as they are points of convergence," Dr. Muasher said following a regular Council of Ministers meeting Tuesday. He announced that the Cabinet would finish its debate of the draft law next week.

Last week, the JPA accused Dr. Muasher of marginalising the role of the association and stepping over its historic rights by preparing the draft law without consulting with its board.

In a statement, the JPA board branded the minister's attitude as hostile and inexplicable, and called on Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to intervene to solve the dispute.

"This attitude is in contradiction with the government's declared stand towards the press and its slogans of transparency and of raising the ceiling of freedom and responsibility," the statement said.

Such charges were dismissed by Dr. Muasher: "I don't want to start a fight. I've done everything I can to come up with a modern law. It is up to the press corps and the House to decide on the changes" to the current JPA law.

The current law dates back to 1983. Although the JPA presented several amendments to the law in 1990, the Lower House's Law Committee

Israeli elections and Jordanian perspectives

By Dr. Samir Mutawi

A Jerusalem Post front page report last Monday stating that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres had conducted consultations with his top aides on how to ease "strain" in relations with Jordan surprised few Jordanians.

Indeed, several stories and perspectives of what was happening behind the scenes in those relations have been in circulation for some weeks now. The general feeling in this country has been one of total frustration that the Israelis were delivering no more than "sweet-talk" to Jordanians.

When it came to fulfilling their part of the bargain in implementing the spirit and substance of the Wadi Araba treaty, the Israelis were just dragging their feet and procrastinating, as far as we Jordanians saw it. Take as example the Transport and Trade Agreement which "was subjected to all kinds of delaying tactics," by the Israelis as one Jordanian official put it.

Representatives of the business community have been complaining that all our trading efforts with Israel and Palestinian self-rule areas have ended in a shocking deficit in our trade balance in favour of Israel.

In 1995, an economist explains, Jordan's exports to Israel and the self-rule areas totalled a meagre JD 57,000 against a JD 550,000 imports from Israel. A one-way traffic, particularly since the closure of Palestinian territories brought our trading endeavours with them to a painful halt. On the political front, and while accepting that some Israeli "security" measures were essential following the suicide bombings in Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv, Jordanians committed to peace were alarmed by the severity and harshness of the steps taken against the whole West Bank and Gaza population, making them virtual prisoners in their own territories. A circumstance the Jordanian government felt unable to con-

done or swallow and made every diplomatic effort to convey its position to the Israeli government, to no avail.

The failure by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to lift or ease what was perceived as collective punishment that caused irreparable damage to the economy of the Palestinian areas and painful hardships to their inhabitants was strongly condemned by all our parliamentarians.

Jordanians were further stunned by the extent of the Israeli unwarranted and unnecessary campaign in South Lebanon. Infuriated by the level of destruction and bloodshed, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti was compelled to make a move to stop the carnage.

Realising that a coordinated effort with Syria was out a realistic target, Mr. Kabariti's drive took him to Israel only to be rebuffed by the election-motivated Peres.

Reflecting our leadership's exasperation with the Israeli premier, Jordanian political circles grew restless over the situation.

No one more than Peres, it was said, was aware of Jordan's favoured role as a moderating player in inter-Arab politics. Preventing Jordan from exercising that role, considered its regional raison d'être, while accepting Syria's, not yet a peace partner for Israel, to play it was seen as a blow in the face that could hardly be tolerated.

Another of the circulated stories in Amman referred to lack of Labour Party consultations or coordination with Jordan on the matter of secret negotiations with leading members of the PLO on the final status of Palestinian areas. Having dropped objections to the establishment of a Palestinian state in these areas without such consultations, Labour Party was clearly disregarding Jordan's strategic interests in the West Bank, according to these stories. A statement by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak in the Jerusalem Post newspaper

acknowledging that "Jordan has a central role in any final status agreement with the Palestinians" was described as a belated effort to rectify that "error". To explain why it had happened, Barak went on to say that it would be unwise to discuss the nature of a link between Jordan — which he called a stabilising factor — and the Palestinians at this point since both sides would then view it as interference.

As an obvious indication of Jordan's dismay and anger, Jordanian and Israeli observers said at the time, His Majesty King Hussein declined twice to meet with Peres. The first time, co-confirmed by the Jerusalem Post, was following an invitation to meet with Mr. Peres and President Clinton in Washington last month. Realising the extent of Jordanian feelings towards him, Peres requested to make a visit to Amman last week, meant as a pre-election gesture of goodwill, but was turned down again.

While the Post quoted certain sources as saying that King Hussein "declined to appear with Peres both times to maintain neutrality between Labour and the Likud," several Arab observers thought that the King's refusal to meet with peace-partner Peres was a clear manifestation of dismay.

Under normal circumstances, no particular significance would have been attached to these developments, which in fact were largely played down by Jordanian officials. But an earlier visit made by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu during which he met with the King and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan added an obvious significance to denying Mr. Peres' requests, some reports said. Although made a while ago, the visit provided Mr. Netanyahu with an opportunity to outline Likud's changed election platform, emphasising the party's departure from ideological expansionist designs vis-à-vis Jordan.

Peres, according to a well informed Israeli academic, was prevented from having a similar opportunity during which his government's position on the future of the Palestinian territories would have been clearly conveyed. The academic was quick to add, however, that no one in Jordan should underestimate the magnitude and seriousness of the Labour Party's gesture to drop an earlier objection to the establishment of a Palestinian state out of its manifesto. This step, he pointed out, would be totally unthinkable should the Israeli electorate elect a Likud-led majority to the Knesset which, one might add, is a clear indication of how serious and keeo Labour is to achieve peace on the basis of "land-for-peace" formula.

Some Israelis admit that lack of prior consultations on this very point may have been the cause of Jordanian apprehensions in the first place. A Likud promise of a more involved Jordanian role in the West Bank looks like having contributed to the Jordanian leadership's disaffection with Peres, they believe. However, if an article by the editor of Al Aswaj daily Mustafa Abu Libdeh, entitled "A Likud who may salvage the peace process" was meant to carry a message to the Israeli prime minister, it actually failed to do so.

Other observers stress that if Abu Libdeh was trying to reflect an official Jordanian view, he must have misconceived what he heard. At no point, a well-informed Israeli observer said, did Israel's Labour government ignore Jordan's strategic interests in the West Bank as emphasised by Foreign Minister Barak in his Jerusalem Post interview. Peres has repeatedly indicated favouring a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians. Recognising Jordan's special role in the holy places of Jerusalem is another example of the Labour Party's commitment to Jordan. Nothing has changed,

the observer concluded.

Jordanian reading of Abu Libdeh's article is somewhat more heated. Several columnists dismissed its tone and foundations and expressed serious doubts about the prospects of forging a working relationship between a Likud-led Israel and Jordan.

No matter what Netanyahu may have advocated during his visit here, the Jordanian public generally mistrusts the man and his party, notwithstanding the shattered image of Peres following Israel's atrocities in South Lebanon. The bottom line in all circulating arguments in Jordan stresses that before reaching a just and comprehensive solution that gives the Palestinians the right to self-determination and statehood, no Jordanian would feel safe about Likud's ideological plans, in spite of the change in the party's election platform regarding Jordan. If the Palestinian problem is not solved on Palestinian soil, a Jordanian columnist wrote recently, it will have to be solved somewhere else.

While expressing optimistic caution, Jordanians do take comfort with regards to the border issue, following the demarcation of international borders under the Jordan-Israel treaty. The question is to what extent Israel will, under a Likud government, respect these borders.

We can hardly forget that Likud Party leaders, including the adventurous General Ariel Sharon, have, for years, promoted what has been titled the "Alternative Home" for the Palestinians. According to their schemes, the geographical area of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is part of historical Palestine. Hence, they claimed, it is there where the Palestinians should establish their state. Should the Israeli electorate vote the Likud Party into office, who is to guarantee that this dangerous political objective may not be revived one way or the other despite the change in the Likud's election platform or treaty obligations? With the party's alliance with extreme right-wing Tsomet and Moledet, which are committed to the "transfer" programme, this objective will no longer be a far-fetched possibility. It will be a time-bomb ready to explode when regional circumstances permit.

By way of hedging, political lobbies in Jordan are actively involved at present in advocating a post-Palestinian independence confederation to prevent a de facto Likud package. This, it is said, was clearly conveyed to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat during the recent three-way summit in Cairo so as to allay his fears and suspicions.

Once Israeli elections are out of the way, Jordanians expect there will be a speedy commencement of serious and business-like negotiations on the Syrian-Lebanese track as well as within the Israeli-Palestinian "final phase" framework, covering the more intractable issues such as Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, borders etc.

It goes without saying that an Israeli Labour government recognises Jordan's strategic interests in achieving a comprehensive and acceptable settlement of all these issues. Although we may not expect an easy solution to the problems of Jerusalem or the refugees, these are issues of particular prominence on the Jordanian agenda.

Peace is bound to come, sooner or later, but without quick and humane action to alleviate the Palestinian sufferings it will be a bitter peace and would certainly not be a lasting one.

Dr. Mutawi is working as a media consultant in Amman and London. He worked as a media adviser at the Royal Court and also as a producer with the BBC Radio and Television. He is the author of the book "Jordan in the 1967 war". He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

King reaffirms commitments

(Continued from page 1)

the genuine Israeli desire to withdraw from the Lebanese territories."

Jordan's relations with Kuwait, King Hussein said, have been restored to normal. Jordan has always been keen on maintaining brotherly relations with all Arab brethren, he said. Relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia have grown stronger than they were before, he said, adding that Jordan would like to base these relations on solid ground in order not to allow any party to undermine or damage Jordan's ties with other Arab countries.

Different experience for Israelis

(Continued from page 1)

The winner of the premiership is most likely to succeed in forming a government because several parties have already announced their willingness to join government regardless of the premier's affiliation.

Mr. Peres' announcement that any agreement with the Palestinians and Syria will have to be approved by a plebiscite was aimed at facilitating the entry into government by various parties.

There is a likelihood that Mr. Netanyahu might win if the opinion polls prove to be flawed. In this case Mr. Netanyahu could also form a government with the help of religious and other small parties. Mr. Netanyahu could also invite Labour to join in a "national unity government" in view of the serious issues facing the country, especially the negotiations with the Palestinians and Syria.

Rumours are spreading in Israel that Mr. Peres could run as candidate for the post of the U.N. Secretary General to succeed Boutros Ghali if he fails in the elections.

Arab Israeli participation in the elections is expected to reach 86 per cent, up from 69 per cent in the previous elections. They represent 16 per cent of the total number of the electorate.

Mr. Peres does not enjoy a majority of the Jewish voters and so he naturally depends on the Arab voters. After the Israeli latest blitz on Lebanon the Arabs threatened to cast blank ballots but Mr. Peres has improved his stand among the Arab voters.

Kabul coalition talks under way

(Continued from page 12)

also joined government forces as part of an agreement to establish a joint security force for Kabul.

Over the weekend, Mr. Hekmatyar's gunmen fought side-by-side with government troops against rebel Taliban forces southeast of Kabul.

Mr. Hekmatyar said meanwhile he will send 30,000 fighters to defend Kabul against the Taliban.

His Hezb-e-Islami is now committed under the accord with Mr. Rabbani to defend the Afghan capital, he told the Arab newspaper Al Hayat.

"Already after the announcement of last Friday accord, the Taliban positions have moved back 20 kilometres from around Kabul. What will they do if we intervene militarily alongside the government?" he asked.

He said the accord with Mr. Rabbani was designed to "counter the American plans to divide Afghanistan," and he ruled out mediation by the United Nations.

"When a member of the U.S. Senate visited Afghanistan and recommended that U.N. mediator Mahmoud Al Mistry be changed, the latter was given instructions to resign," he said.

Crown Prince meets Saudi team

(Continued from page 1)

Saudi Arabia, Prince Hassan said that Jordan was ready to play its role and provide the services and participate in joint investments and free trade zones.

The private sectors in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, Prince Hassan said, must adapt to the requirements of the new stage, adding that holding companies created by the private sector could develop agriculture and water resources and increase food production.

Referring to the differences between the Saudi and Jordanian economies, he said that the Jordanian gross domestic product was estimated at \$5 billion compared to Saudi Arabia's \$120 billion. Such disparity does not prevent the two sides to work towards integration, he said. He expressed hope that officials and business people from both sides would succeed in promoting economic and trade ties between the two countries.

The Saudi businessmen delegation earlier visited the Sahab Industrial City.

Cabinet endorses draft laws

(Continued from page 1)

The minister stressed the need to introduce reform to official media organisations and to adopt a new modern information, saying that past information policies were not "conducive to expressing the stand of the state in any way."

Yousef Mansour, an economic advisor at the Ministry of Planning, supported full privatisation of the official media, but warned that the institutions need time before entering a competitive market.

Dr. Mansour, who is also a columnist for the Jordan Times, said the official media must be privatised in order for it to be able to compete in a free market where citizens have access to foreign media organisations.

He said privatising the radio and television would result in developing the performance of these institutions because they would be operating on commercial basis which would mean working to meet the market's demands for efficient and competitive product.

The new draft laws which the government adopted Tuesday are widely seen to lead to a controversial debate at the Lower House of Parliament where many deputies advocate strict government monitoring and control of radio and television.

Kabariti

(Continued from page 1)

alien to the teachings of Islam which advocates tolerance."

Referring to France's political stance and the killing of the monks, the statement said: "The Jordanian people deeply appreciate the positive development in France's foreign policy, especially in the light of the latest Israeli aggression on Lebanon and the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea as well as Paris' stand vis-a-vis the embargo on Iraq and the Bosnian question."

"The Jordanian parliament looks forward to the day when Algeria overcomes its present crisis and restores stability and peace," added the statement.

Peres, Netanyahu end campaign

(Continued from page 1)

opinion polls show a virtual tie in the prime ministerial race since the gap between Mr. Peres and Mr. Netanyahu was equal to the surveys' margin of error.

Boosted by the latest polls — which compare to a 15-point lead for Mr. Peres three months ago — an upbeat Netanyahu predicted "an interesting surprise" in Wednesday's vote.

"We're going to win, our polls show we have a 52-48 per cent lead," he told a meeting of Likud campaign workers in a brief pep talk here.

Meanwhile the elections got off to a highly symbolic start as soldiers deployed in Palestinian and Lebanese territories cast ballots a day ahead.

Rather than soldiers trooping to the polls it was the ballot boxes which came to the army units deployed at checkpoints on the Israel-West Bank border and other occupation outposts.

Army trucks, each guarded by a sergeant and two other soldiers, rolled into the bases beginning at 7:00 a.m. under the responsibility of the army.

The blue ballot box, bearing the symbol of the Israeli state, was set up on an outdoor table, held in place against the hot wind by a few stones.

Like their civilian counterparts, each soldier received a white envelope and ballots for the Knesset election and yellow ones for the close prime ministerial race.

After placing the ballots of their choice in the envelopes, the soldiers then put these into a larger third envelope, marked with their army ID number in a security measure to ensure soldiers do not vote twice, once as a serviceman and once as a civilian.

Israeli security forces meanwhile arrested nine suspected Palestinian activists overnight on the West Bank, a spokesman said.

The nine were detained during operations in the Jenin and Hebron regions on charges of "belonging to or aiding hostile organisations," the military's term for suspected members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Government officials say the groups want to carry out another major attack ahead of Wednesday's election in hopes of swinging the vote to the right and torpedoing Mr. Peres' efforts to solidify the peace process.

To prevent the attacks, the army has barred all movement of Palestinians and goods from the territories into Israel until after the election, although the government announced Tuesday that 50 Palestinian journalists would be given special permission to cover Wednesday's voting.

Some 20,000 soldiers and policemen plus 3-4,000 civil guards were deployed Tuesday in an unprecedented security operation for the election, police spokesman Eric Bar Chen said.

Asians, China challenge U.S. in economic race — study

GENEVA (R) — The United States is strengthening its position as the world's most competitive economy but faces a long-term challenge from the dynamism of Asian countries including China, according to a report.

The report, from the Lusanne International Institute for Management Development (IMD), found Singapore in second place behind the United States but noted two "remote but brilliant stars" in reforming New Zealand and Chile.

"The United States has reinforced its leadership position in world competitiveness... And has even increased its lead over other nations," said the report, based on statistics and a detailed opinion survey among top executives around the globe.

IMD Professor Stephen Garelli, director of the project, said the results were likely to fuel debate on the social cost of the new U.S. surge — which had seen benefits go largely to companies and financial institutions.

The report, ranking 46 countries, forms the centerpiece of the first World Competitiveness Yearbook to be issued by the IMD, one of Europe's most respected management schools.

For seven years, the IMD published an annual report together with the Geneva-based World Economic Forum, organizer of the annual gathering of business and political leaders in the

Swiss mountain resort of Davos.

The joint report has been widely used by private businesses around the world in assessing risk and making key investment decisions, particularly in emerging economies.

But last year the two decided to go their own ways. The forum, which before linking with IMD published its own survey, is issuing its 1996 world competitiveness report next week.

IMD says it assesses competitiveness through "analysis of the mechanisms leading to wealth creation in a nation" partly based on a survey considering eight different factors answered by 3,162 top executives around the world.

Key among these is "domestic economy" where, although the United States also led, Asian states took six of the top 10 positions — with China second, Singapore third, South Korea fourth, Japan fifth, Malaysia seventh and Hong Kong eighth.

Dr. Garelli said this result showed the "dynamic state" of the regional economy, whose growth, size and stability were the key ingredients that would attract more and more foreign companies.

The other seven factors covered by the report are internationalisation, government, management, finance, infrastructure, science and technology, and people — or work force quality.

In overall terms a

struggling Japan, which had dominated the competitiveness league during the 1980s and early 1990s but lost its top place to the United States two years ago, was in fourth place behind Hong Kong.

"The implication is that Japan needs to face long-term structural problems so that it can adapt its political system and reform society," the IMD said.

Moving up to fifth place from seventh in last year's joint report was Denmark, with Norway sixth, Netherlands seventh and Luxembourg eighth. Switzerland, down from fifth last year, was ninth, and Germany, down from sixth, was 10th.

Singapore's success from a small home base rested on the fact that it had created "a very successful model characterised by a highly effective government, a sound structure in finance and a good performance in management."

New Zealand, 11th, and Chile, 13th, proved that in a globalised economy distance was a declining barrier to competitiveness, the IMD said. Both ranked in the top 10 for domestic economy and for management.

Under government, in which countries are assessed, on the degree to which government policies aid competitiveness, New Zealand ranked third for the second year in a row and Chile moved up from sixth to fifth.

Jordanian, Palestinian officials discuss economic relations

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Palestinian officials Tuesday discussed scopes of increasing commercial exchange and the Jordanian-Palestinian trade agreement, in addition to the situation of the Palestinian market.

Addressing the meeting, which was organized by the Jordanian Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation, and the Amman Chamber of Industry, Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary-General Mohammad Smadi said the Jordanian-Palestinian trade agreement was the first Jordanian-Palestinian free trade agreement. It is governed by the Israeli-Palestinian economic agreement, which specifies the quality and quantity of commodities the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) can import.

Dr. Smadi said the restrictions on Palestinian-Jordanian trade were governed by the criteria laid down by the Israeli side on the flow of goods through the crossing points.

Dr. Smadi stressed the need for Jordan to know the various aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements, and called for joining hands to try to remove the obstacles at the crossing points.

Deputy Palestinian Minister of Industry and Trade Samir Halilieh said the Palestinian-Israeli agreement sought to achieve two major objectives. He said the Palestinian and Israeli sides have agreed to expand the lists of Palestinian imports and to increase the number of Jordanian trucks carrying Jordanian goods to the PNA areas to 50 trucks a day.

OECD cuts European growth projections, sees sharper Japan upturn

PARIS (AFP) — Germany is likely to record a barely positive growth rate of 0.5 per cent this year, the OECD said Monday, announcing a sharp downward revision of its growth projections for Europe but a better than expected figure for Japan.

The Japanese economy, now slowly emerging from the doldrums, may now grow by 2.2 per cent this year and a healthy 2.4 per cent in 1997, it said.

A summary of the latest forecasts by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) prepared for its annual ministerial meeting put growth in the OECD area overall at 2.1 per cent this year, virtually unchanged from a revised 1.9 per cent in 1995.

This was half a point below projections by OECD forecasters last December, when they estimated last year's growth at 2.4 per cent and predicted 2.6 per cent for this year, rising to 2.8 per cent in 1997.

For OECD Europe, they now expect a poor 1.6 per cent this year but a recovery to 2.7 per cent in 1997, the same as the region's 1995 performance.

Germany, initially expected to grow by 2.4 per cent this year and 2.7 per cent in 1997, suffered the sharpest downward revision at respectively 0.5 and 2.4 per cent.

OECD chief economist Kumi Shigehara said the reason was an excessive appreciation of the German mark against the U.S. dollar last year.

Outgoing OECD Secretary General Jean-Claude Paye told a news conference the slowdown that hit Europe at the end of last year now appeared to have given way to

an upturn.

Outside Europe, the OECD now expects more moderate expansion in the United States at 2.3 per cent this year, falling off to 2.0 per cent in 1997, while six months ago the figures mooted were 2.7 and 2.8 per cent.

Mr. Shigehara explained that this was mainly due to technical factors as the U.S. has recently revamped its national accounting system.

The 1996 forecast for the U.S. has in fact been adjusted upwards from 1.9 per cent at the beginning of May, as a result of news that the economy grew at an annual rate of 2.8 per cent in the first quarter.

The best news was for Japan which will no longer be the laggard among the key economies this year.

At 2.2 per cent, a quarter-point better than expected six months ago, its economy will grow faster than the OECD average this year for the first time since 1991.

Japan will also be expanding at a faster clip than the four major European countries. Among Germany's partners, the OECD now expects lack-lustre growth of about 1.0 per cent in France and 2.0 per cent in Italy and Britain, delegation sources said.

Canada meanwhile looks likely to top the group of seven (G-7) growth league this year at about 2.4 per cent, which will nevertheless be 0.6 points less than the 3.0 per cent rate expected by the OECD six months

ago.

The OECD meanwhile reported a one-point upward revision of Germany's jobless rate at an average of 10.3 per cent this year, up from 9.4 per cent in 1995, and foresaw a further marginal rise to 10.4 per cent in 1997.

For OECD Europe it projected a slight decrease from an unchanged 10.5 per cent this year to 10.4 per cent in 1997, while some further improvement in the U.S. and Japan would offset the worsening in Europe and leave the rates for OECD overall unchanged at respectively 7.7 and 7.6 per cent.

OECD forecasters expected slightly higher inflation figures in the U.S. than initially projected but some further improvement in Europe and Japan, leaving the OECD average — excluding Turkey and Mexico — steady at about 1.9 per cent.

They also said they expected Japan's current account surplus to decline from 2.2 per cent of GDP in 1995 to about 1.6 per cent next year, with a parallel drop in the U.S. deficit from 2.1 to 1.8 per cent of GDP.

As for short term interest rates, the OECD said they might remain broadly unchanged in the U.S. rise somewhat to 0.9 per cent by next year in Japan, but come down by a full point from the 1995 average to 3.5 per cent in Germany and by 1.5 point to 5.5 per cent on average in the four major European countries.

Bank of Israel raises interest rate

TEL AVIV (R) — The independent Bank of Israel, struggling off public sentiment and general elections, has announced an interest rate rise citing rising inflation and a heated economy.

The central bank raised its key lending rate, which commercial banks pay at daily and weekly monetary tenders, by 0.7 percentage point for June to an annualised 15.5 per cent.

Commercial banks followed suit, hiking their prime rates by 0.7 percentage point to an annualised 17.0 per cent.

The rate increase was in line with market expecta-

tions, following the high 1.7 per cent increase in April's consumer price index.

Last month the central bank raised interest rates by 0.8 percentage point.

It said it was important to restrain monetary policy to meet the government's 1996 inflation target of 8-10 per cent.

Most economists said another rate increase was inevitable given that inflation is running at an annual rate of 14 per cent. Still, some had thought the bank would hold off until after elections for a new parliament and

prime minister.

But banking sources said the central bank, which acts alone in determining interest rates, decided to behave as if this was a regular month rather than an election period.

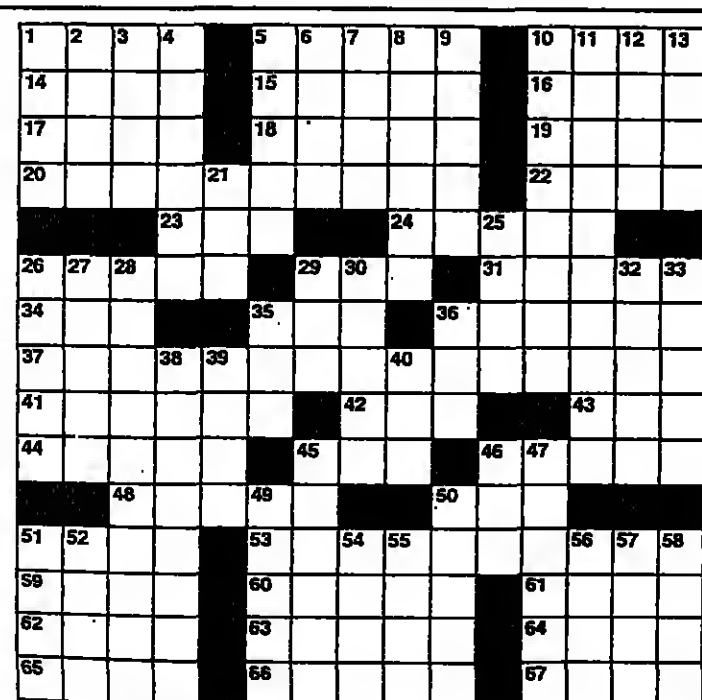
Bank of Israel governor Jacob Frenkel is virtually assured of being reappointed to a second five-year term in August.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Labour has already announced he will reappoint Dr Frenkel if reelected. Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu has also spoken highly of the governor.

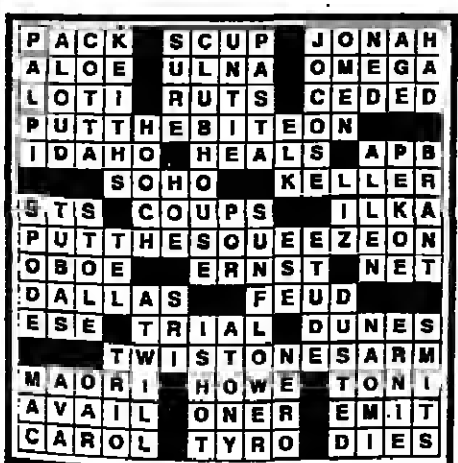
THE Daily Crossword by Albert J. Klaus

ACROSS

- 1 Mimic
- 5 Blackthorns
- 10 Black, to poets
- 14 Balhe
- 15 Punctuation mark
- 16 Prod
- 17 God of war
- 18 Red as —
- 19 Irritate
- 20 Darryl of baseball
- 22 River to the Baltic
- 23 — Cruces, TX
- 24 Fruit of the vine
- 26 Units of illumination
- 29 Have being
- 31 Plaster of Paris
- 34 "— was going to..."
- 35 Self
- 36 Worker on pictures
- 37 A world boxing champ
- 41 Dealer
- 42 Assistance
- 43 "— Got Your Number"
- 44 Small fish
- 45 Slout
- 46 Crane or heron
- 48 Fencing swords
- 50 Father
- 51 Fabric used for stuffing
- 53 1991 World Series player
- 59 Concerning
- 60 Romeo
- 61 Essence
- 62 Gang or mob end
- 63 "— we all?"
- 64 She, in Sedan
- 65 Ophidian sound
- 66 Irritable
- 67 Appear



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DOWN

- 1 "Oh, woe!"
- 2 Portion
- 3 Always
- 4 Used-car transaction
- 5 Strikebreakers
- 6 Ear part
- 7 Hebrew measure
- 8 Become visible
- 9 Butterfly
- 10 Frenchman, e.g.
- 11 Wedding ceremony girl
- 12 Eye amorously
- 13 "— do-well"
- 14 Existed
- 15 Field; pref.
- 16 Endures
- 17 Appropriate
- 18 Reelers
- 19 Turkish leader
- 20 Kingly
- 21 Wait on tables
- 22 Command
- 23 Goo!
- 24 Supplied with nourishment
- 25 Devices that adjust to fit
- 26 Nerve network
- 27 Fabricate
- 28 Beached
- 29 Bankroll
- 30 Maxims
- 31 Conspicuous success
- 32 Unwashed
- 33 Party
- 34 — spumante
- 35 Burl of music
- 36 Furnished
- 37 Base
- 38 Man or Capri
- 39 Goblet part

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



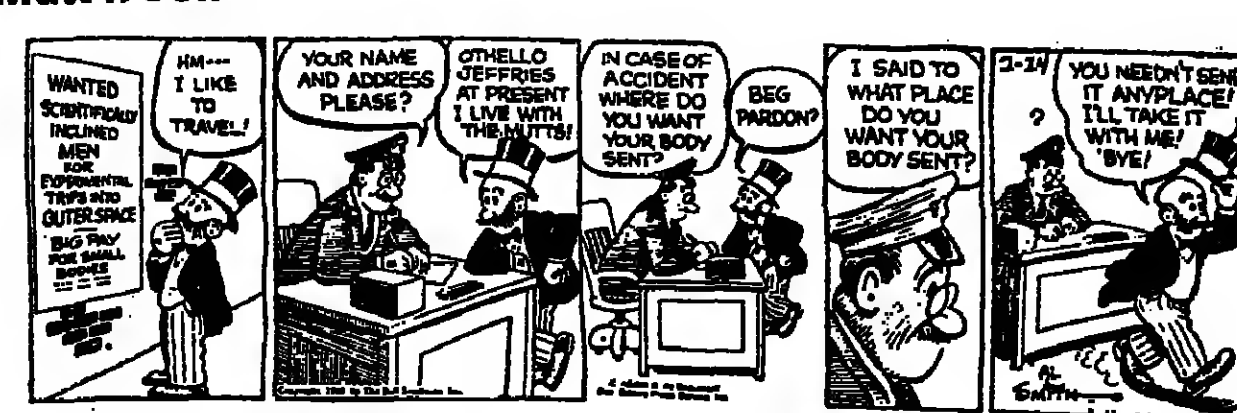
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Make sure you carry through with what you have planned for today and get very good results, provided you are careful with credit or financial operations. Tonight will be a good time to meet with some close friends.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You had better postpone going after new interests today since you would meet with obstacles and delays which could be costly not only to you financially, but it could seriously damage your reputation.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good time to seek the advice from experts on the best method to improve your business affairs today, and by doing so you will avoid getting into some difficulty which could be embarrassing to you in the long run.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be careful in speaking either with your fellow associates or outsiders today, otherwise you could offend someone who will be very supportive in whatever is your career activities for the days ahead.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) It is important that you follow the directions of those who are in control today, so you do not rock the boat in terms of your career activities. Do not allow a fellow associate who has a chip on his or her shoulder to upset you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is the day today to get your capabilities recognised by those individuals who can be of great assistance in the success of your chosen career and thereby assuring the progress which is so important to you at this time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is not a good time to bring up any moot points at home otherwise you will thereby avoid controversy. You should wait until a more appropriate period of time to invite guests into your residence.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Use tact in all form of communicating, be it telephone, written or spoken, otherwise there will be a severance of valuable connections, which has taken to much effort and patience to establish in the first place.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Handle relatively unimportant matters today since they are an integral part of the final game plan which you have developed in your mind for your success. Later tonight will be good for sparkling conversation between friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You do not feel sure of yourself during the morning hours today, so it is advisable that you do not make any important decisions until later in the day for the odds of success to improve in your favor.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You want to get rid of all your difficulties whether they be financial or career related today, however it would be wise to handle any of your concerns with kid gloves, thereby avoiding any situation you do not desire.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A friendly bigwig could give you ideas which are fine today, though could be unusable at this time, so be patient for the appropriate moment and present any suggestions you have come across to others.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Indian, Jordanian firms seek to enhance ties in chemicals, pharmaceuticals

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — There is a very good scope for cooperation between Indian and Jordanian companies in pharmaceutical and chemical industries, and Indian firms stand ready to enter joint ventures here, a visiting delegation said Sunday.

The group, representing Indian manufacturers and exporters of basic chemicals

and pharmaceuticals, participated in a "buyer-seller" meeting in Amman in the latest of a series of events organised by the Indian embassy this year in a bid to boost economic ties with Jordan and the Middle East.

Delegation members said they found very good response from Jordanian importers of chemicals as well as manufacturers of pharmaceuticals in Indian products and were highly optimistic to build on contacts established at the meeting.

Given the fast growth in Jordan's pharmaceutical industry, India could be one of the key suppliers of bulk medicine as well as disposable items — two areas where few other countries could beat the sub-continent.

A concrete outcome of the meeting was an agreement to explore the possibilities of setting up a dye industry in Jordan.

Sanjay Panda, second secretary at the Indian embassy, said "the initial idea was floated at the meeting and technical and other issues are expected to be discussed in detail in the next two days."

If and when established it will be Jordan's first dye industry.

Discussed during the meeting were the various aspects of trade in chemicals and pharmaceuticals between Jordan and India.

In an opening speech, Mr. Panda noted that while Jordan's imports in the two sectors had gone up substantially in the last three years, India's share of exports to Jordan of the same products remained largely stagnant.

India's share of Jordan's imports of pharmaceuticals remains at around one per cent and of chemicals at between 2.5 and three per cent, he said.

One of the problems encountered by Indian ex-

porters of pharmaceutical formulations — final products — to Jordan is a registration process after satisfying the Ministry of Health in terms of quality as well as manufacturing processes.

Samir Qazzaz, an official from the ministry, explained that the problem was not limited to India but all countries with which Jordan is dealing for the first time in this area.

"It is not enough that the product is of good quality," he said. "We have to satisfy ourselves that good manufacturing practices are followed."

In any event, Mr. Qazzaz said, he expects the problem, which has also been cited by Cyprus and Greece, to resolve itself in due course of time.

"We believe that there is very good scope of cooperation between Jordan and India in this respect," said Mr. Qazzaz.

The business delegation is the latest from India to visit Jordan after representatives of the industry and trade sectors of the two countries signed an agreement last year to step up cooperation and organise regular exchange of visits.

Apart from seeking to expand exports of these products, delegation members, who represent a wide cross-section of Indian chemical and pharmaceuticals industry, are also ready to consider joint ventures in Jordan provided they find right local partners.

"We see Jordan's geographic location as one of its key advantages," said P.S. Patel, managing director of Vibor Chemicals. While the size of the Jordanian market per se is too small, the Kingdom could be one of the best conduits to the regional market, he said.



Jordanian and Indian businessmen deliberate over potential cooperation in the chemicals and pharmaceutical sectors at a meeting held in Amman Tuesday.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 28/05/1996

PRICE	LAST	OF	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE				
		TRABS.		JD						
4.890	4.180	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.5	3.13	5	4750	19004	4.48	4.47	01
4.740	4.250	CASRO ARABIAN BANK	11.1	2.17	1	5000	23000	4.60	4.60	-
3.250	3.000	BANK OF JORDAN	12.3	0.00	1	1000	3410	3.42	3.42	-
2.700	2.300	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.4	5.87	2	1600	953	2.31	2.37	06+
1.040	2.600	JOR. KOWAT BANK	20.4	0.00	12	1417	3975	2.81	2.81	-
1.500	.920	JOR. GULF BANK	5.3	7.22	20	23800	23886	.97	.97	-
4.180	1.300	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.1	0.00	8	3100	12294	3.99	3.97	02
4.480	1.480	JOR. INV. TRV. BANK	19.3	0.00	2	221	789	3.97	3.87	-
1.300	.410	AMMAN BANK TRV.	4	0.00	24	48592	23666	.51	.48	03
5.850	4.750	ARAB BANKING CO.	24.6	0.00	1	800	2375	4.75	4.75	-
1.930	1.070	PELADIEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	6	2100	2493	1.20	1.18	02
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 278.51 CHNG: -0.02 83 91505 117753										
1.920	1.600	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	12.7	4.69	1	100	260	1.60	1.60	-
1.500	1.450	UNIVERSAL INSUR.	10.3	0.00	1	100	140	1.45	1.40	05
2.400	2.000	YAMMOUQ INSUR.	4	0.00	1	2000	5600	2.90	2.80	10
4.600	4.000	PHILADELPHIA INSUR.	13.6	0.00	1	100	460	4.60	4.60	-
2.630	2.400	ARAB UNIV. INTL. INSUR.	6.1	0.00	2	100	260	2.60	2.60	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 124.40 CHNG: -0.22 5 2400 6620										
1.960	1.520	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.0	7.55	29	21991	26047	1.60	1.59	01
1.160	.900	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.9	3.38	4	1500	1424	.96	.94	02
1.370	.900	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	18.9	0.00	2	1000	900	.90	.90	-
3.660	3.080	ARAB INTL. INV. EDCC.	12.5	6.35	10	1287	4043	3.16	3.15	01
1.550	.980	BAKER EDUCATION	9	0.00	10	8426	5317	.99	.98	-
2.470	1.870	UNITED CO.	11.0	6.78	22	11500	24180	1.12	2.09	03
1.200	.820	UNION LADY DEV.	8	0.00	18	12000	12779	1.07	1.06	01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 116.24 CHNG: -0.54 92 54704 83626										
4.120	1.340	JOR. GENEST FRCT.	20.0	2.87	19	8933	31136	3.50	3.49	01
5.360	4.740	ARAB POTASH CO.	16.2	3.74	4	1500	8025	5.37	5.35	02
11.150	8.900	JOR. PENTRIM. INV.	13.7	5.87	10	1770	13059	10.18	10.22	04+
8.000	7.000	JORDAN TANNING	7.7	5.03	2	58	615	7.10	7.15	05+
8.900	7.100	JOR. MONSTER MILLS	9.0	5.47	4	5000	36470	7.75	7.70	05
5.870	3.660	ARAB TEAM. WASTE	20.9	5.25	12	2900	11072	3.80	3.81	03
6.480	5.800	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.6	3.97	4	3338	21029	6.38	6.30	06
2.590	1.620	RAJIA INDUSTRIES	7.3	0.00	1	200	340	1.76	1.70	06
6.400	4.750	ARAB ALUM. IND.	7.8	8.62	10	4600	21440	4.77	4.65	12
1.450	1.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	41	65561	61999	2.60	2.56	04
1.540	1.240	ARAB PAPER CONV. TR.	8.4	8.36	11	4060	5071	1.27	1.24	03
1.350	.840	NATIONAL IND.	12.6	7.06	4	4000	3400	.86	.85	04
2.950	1.060	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	82	25500	36258	1.48	1.41	07
1.320	.820	JOR. ROCHMOG CHDS.	8	0.00	1	250	270	1.11	1.08	03
2.450	2.650	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM.	20.4	0.00	1	400	1340	3.30	3.35	08+
1.940	.950	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	8	2500	2705	1.14	1.08	04
2.580	1.050	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	28.5	0.00	18	6200	9586	1.60	1.52	04
3.640	2.350	UNIV. HOUS. IND.	7.8	7.81	20	6350	16248	2.60	2.56	04
2.450	1.390	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	20.5	0.00	33	23000	21403	1.60	1.63	02
2.100	1.000	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	31.0	0.00	20	6550	7480	1.17	1.14	02
2.610	1.940	AL-KAY HANAY KEAN	8	0.00	12	3600	6867	1.95	1.89	06
1.570	1.150	IMPL. YOGACCO	30.1	0.00	24	58800	75941	1.30	1.28	02
2.580	1.180	UNION CH. & VEG.	33.3	0.00	2	101	156	1.37	1.35	02
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.62 CHNG: -0.50 344 224990 375606										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 146.69 CHNG: -0.25 524 373599 583605										

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 28/05/1996

PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
PRICE				SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE	
1.000	JOR. TRADE FAC.	19.7	0.00	10	10700	7218	.75	.74
1.000	UNION INV. SV.	78.4	0.00	7	1450	1450	.82	.82
1.500	ARAB FERT. IND.	9	0.00	21	3850	6953	.90	.78
1.700	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	16	9450	5747	.83	.60
1.240	ARAB FOOD & IND.	9	0.00	16	11250	7125	.70	.63
2.000	MATL. CHEM.	7	0.00	16	16550	26307	1.60	1.58
1.600	MATL. CHEM.	9	0.00	3	1000	673	.69	.67
1.270	MATL. CHEM. IND. NAMICO	2	0.00	19	8036	6300	.79	.78
1.150	KAYAK ORES & HOLEOS	8	0.00	2	2000	1190	.60	.59
1.260	JORDAN EPRM.	8	0.00	18	17676	199576	.96	.96
1.070	ARAB KALAT IND.	9	0.00	3	150	435	.59	.58
1.090	MIDEAST PHARM. 75*	8	0.00	13	6265	2756	.70	.69
1.100	UNION TUBACCO 75*	8	0.00	4	1200	1188	1.24	1.24
1.030	RAJIA PHARM. 50*	8	0.00	13	13000	31200	.75	.74
1.070	INDUS. IND.	20.4	0.00	5	5200	3120	.59	.60
1.520	INDUS. CERAMIC	8	0.00	15	7321	6774	.93	.92
1.050	TEXTILES MANUF.	9	0.00	3	4700	2585	.56	.55
1.020	PHARM. MAN. P. CHIV.	8	0.00	8	6789	5985	.96	.93
1.970	MATL. CHEM. 75*	8	0.00	7	13750	6565	.72	.73
1.500	IND. SECT COMPLEX	8.6	0.00	27	22300	16279	.74	.73
GRAND TOTAL								
INDEX: 115.62		CHG: -0.50		344	224990	375606		

* New 12 months low
 * Stock dividend during the past 12 months
 * Listed during the past 12 months
 * P/E ratio is 100 or more
 * Negative P/E
 * Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3746/56	Canadian dollar	72.18
	1.3462/72	Deutsche mark	82
	1.7396/06	Dutch guilder	82
	1.2720/30	Swiss franc	78
	31.77/81	Belgian franc	60
	5.2296/46	French franc	60
	1556.6/8.1	Italian lire	60
	108.57/67	Japanese yen	60
	6.8210/10	Swedish crown	60
	5.9709/59	Norwegian crown	60
	1.4118/28	Singapore dollars	60
	0.7945/50	Australian dollars	60
	7.7368/78	Hong Kong dollars	60

One Sterling
 Gold (ounce)

\$1.5115/25
 \$392.10/92.61

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan Worsted Mills Company hikes net after-tax profit by 96%

EXPORTS TO Iraq accounted for about 36 per cent of the total sales recorded by the Jordan Worsted Mills Company (JWMC) last year as they amounted to JD 4.43 million compared with JD 1.7 million in 1994. Total sales jumped by 44 per cent from JD 8.5 million in 1994 to JD 12.3 million in 1995. The company hiked its net after-tax profit by 96 per cent to JD 3.2 million from JD 1.6 million in 1994. The general assembly approved the recommendation of the board of directors to allocate JD 1 million to a special reserve account and to distribute another JD 1 million in dividends to shareholders at a rate of 25 per cent.

Board vice-chairman Abdul Qader Tash told the general assembly that the JWMC supplied some of the needs of El Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company in addition to all the needs of the Armed Forces, the Royal Air Force and the departments of Public Security and Civil Defence as well as other government institutions. He said the JWMC plans to buy four new sewing machines for manufacturing superb and smooth cloth in order to boost sales to El Zay and the local market.

According to the annual report, the company has JD 33 million in total assets (JD 23.5 million in 1994), JD 14.6 million in total current liabilities (JD 6.9 million in 1994) and JD 18.7 million in total shareholders equity (JD 16.7 million in 1994) (Al Rai + Al Aswaj).

Arab Aluminium Industry Company distributes dividends at a rate of 30 per cent despite drop in net profit

DESPITE HIGHER prices for raw materials and intermediate products needed for production, the Arab Aluminium Industry Company (ARAL) opted to keep its sale prices unchanged and, as a result, posted a JD 3.4 million net profit in 1995 compared to JD 5.58 million recorded in 1994. Weathering this drop in net profit, the general assembly approved the recommendation of the board of directors to distribute JD 1.8 million in dividends to shareholders at a rate of 30 per cent.

Addressing the general assembly, board chairman Rajab Al Saad indicated that the company earned a total of JD 16.6 million from sales in 1995, three per cent lower than the 1994 income of JD 17.1 million. He told the shareholders that production of the remelt plant amounted to 6,300 tonnes noting that this plant was considered as the nucleus which provides the extrusion factory with all its needs of aluminium billets. According to the company's annual report, the remelt plant generated JD 1.05 million out of the total JD 3.4 million net pre-tax profit last year.

Mr. Saad said the management of ARAL has carried out appropriate measures to modernise the remelt plant and increase its production capacity to meet the requirements of the newly-established United Aluminium Industries Company for aluminium billets. He expected the work to be completed next month. ARAL has a 75 per cent stake in the new company which has a JD 6 million capital. ARAL also has a 90 per cent stake in a company, which is capitalised at JD 0.5 million, and which manufactures tools and dies necessary for the production process.

Other financial figures highlighted in the annual report were:

— JD 16.8 million in total assets (JD 17.5 million in 1994). Current assets accounted for JD 9.5 million of the total compared to JD 12.9 million in 1994.
 — JD 4.6 million in total current liabilities (JD 6.3 million in 1994).
 — JD 11 million in total shareholders equity.

Mr. Saad wound up the meeting by assuring the shareholders that despite of the Iraqi market to the company's products, ARAL was conducting studies and making the necessary contacts in an attempt to find new markets. He stressed that the company would strive to increase exports to traditional Arab markets especially "as importers there have found that the quality of ARAL products were no less than similar products from advanced countries" (Al Rai + Al Aswaj).

Financial Markets

in co-operation with:
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	Tokyo CLOSING 28/5/96	Tokyo CLOSING 28/5/90
Sterling Pound	1.5133**	1.5113**
Deutsche Mark	1.5425	1.5458
Swiss Franc	1.2685**	1.2713**
French Franc	5.1765**	5.2808**
Japanese Yen	102.75	106.27
European Currency Unit	1.2597**	1.2528**

USD per ECU
* European Closing at 10:00 L.M. GMT
** Forward Closing at 10:00 L.M. GMT

Interbank Interest Rates

Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTH	6 MONTH	12 MONTH
U.S. Dollar	5.18	5.25	5.31	5.50
Sterling Pound	5.90	6.00	6.00	6.30
Deutsche Mark	5.12	5.06	5.06	5.12
Swiss Franc	1.82	1.21	1.21	1.21
French Franc	5.56	5.56	5.68	5.81
Japanese Yen	0.55	0.50	0.49	0.73</

World Chess Championship for Russia, not Baghdad

PARIS (R) — The World Chess Federation (FIDE) dropping controversial plans to stage the World Championship in Baghdad, said on Monday it would be held in Russia.

A FIDE statement sent to Reuters in Paris said U.S. grandmaster Gata Kamsky and Russia's Anatoly Karpov would play for the world title in Elista, capital of Russia's semi-autonomous republic of Kalmykia from June 5 to July 15.

The FIDE statement, relayed by the championship's organising committee which has an office in Paris, said the first move would be played by the son of French film star Alain Delon, Anthony.

FIDE's Russian President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov — who is also President of Kalmykia —

astounded the chess world last March when he chose Baghdad as the championship venue despite United Nations sanctions on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the U.S.-led 1991 Gulf war.

Several national chess bodies had reacted angrily and asked Ilyumzhinov to reconsider his decision.

Ilyumzhinov has said he chose Baghdad as it offered better financial terms than rival venues Moscow and Baku.

The prize money offered in Baghdad was \$2 million. There was no immediate word on what it would be in Elista.

An earlier proposal to stage the match in Montreal, Canada, had fallen through for lack of sponsorship.

FIDE has been trying for more than a year to stage the match. It has been upstaged by world champion Garry Kasparov's rival professional Chess Association (PCA) which held its championship in New York last year with \$1.5 million put up by computer chip maker Intel Corp.

Kasparov, considered the world's strongest player since 1985 when he first won the world title by beating Karpov, broke away from FIDE in 1993 and has successfully defended his PCA title against Nigel Short of Britain and Viswanathan Anand of India.

The U.S. Chess Federation, regarding Baghdad as an unfair venue for an American player, had asked FIDE to move the 20-game contest to Moscow or Baku.

Venables names England squad for Euro '96

LONDON (R) — England soccer manager Terry Venables named his players for Euro '96 on Tuesday, dropping Newcastle United midfielder Robert Lee from the 22-man squad.

Lee joins Chelsea's Dennis Wise, Aston Villa's Ugo Ehiogu and Blackburn's Jason Wilcox in an unlucky quarter of players omitted just 12 days before the championship kick-off at Wembley.

Lee's Newcastle midfield partner Peter Beardsley had already been ruled out in favour of Middlesbrough's Nicky Barmby, and Manchester United defender Gary Pallister had pulled out with a long-term back injury.

England's squad for Euro '96:

David Seaman (Arsenal), Tim Flowers (Blackburn), Ian Walker (Tottenham), Gary Neville (Manchester United), Tony Adams (Arsenal), Gareth Southgate (Aston Villa), Steve Howey (Newcastle), Sol Campbell (Tottenham), Stuart Pearce (Nottingham Forest), Philip Neville (Manchester United), Darren Anderton (Tottenham), Steve Stone (Nottingham Forest), Paul Gascoigne (Rangers), Paul Ince (Inter Milan), David Platt (Arsenal), Jamie Redknapp (Liverpool), Steve McManaman (Liverpool), Les Ferdinand (Newcastle), Robbie Fowler (Liverpool), Nick Barmby (Middlesbrough), Teddy Sheringham (Tottenham), Alan Shearer (Blackburn).



Chicago Bulls guard Michael Jordan high-fives teammates Scottie Pippen (right) and Dennis Rodman (left) after the club's 106-101 win over the Orlando Magic in the Eastern Conference finals May 27 (Reuters photo)

Bulls sweep Magic to reach finals

ORLANDO (R) — Michael Jordan scored 45vengeful points as the Chicago Bulls swept past the Orlando Magic 106-101 Monday and into the NBA finals for the fourth time in six years.

"Michael had the hot hand today," said Chicago's Scottie Pippen. "He was unstoppable, and really kind of carried our team."

"Michael just took the game away from us," said Orlando guard Anfernee Hardaway. "I'm disappointed, and very upset."

The Bulls won four consecutive games from the Magic in an Eastern Conference finals series that was anticipated as an explosive showdown but turned into a one-sided fizzle. Orlando has now suffered playoff sweeps the last three years.

The Bulls, three-peat champions until Jordan's retirement two seasons ago, await the winner of the Western Conference finals between the Seattle SuperSonics and Utah Jazz and will own the homecourt advantage against either foe. Seattle has a 3-1 lead and hosted game 5 Tuesday.

The Bulls, who won a league-record 72 games this season, are now 11-1 in the playoffs.

The victory was a vindication for Jordan, who returned to the NBA last March after a 17-month retirement and made key turnovers at the end of two games in last year's conference semifinals, won by Orlando in six games.

"I felt good that we really saw a challenge and we were faced with a challenge," said Jordan. "I can say in every

game a different guy stepped up and gave us support, and I think that's what this team is all about, it's not a one-individual type of team."

He added: "Today it was my turn. Some of the guys couldn't get it going defensively. I stepped it up a little bit and everybody rallied around that."

"It was revenge for him to come back to that place and prove he was the most valuable player in the league and carry a basketball team," Pippen said.

Orlando, which lost in four straight to the Houston Rockets in last season's NBA finals, got 28 points apiece from Shaquille O'Neal and Hardaway in game 4 against the Bulls.

But the Magic had three key players — Horace Grant, Nick Anderson and Brian Shaw — sidelined by injuries, and they had no answer for Chicago's defensive pressure throughout the series.

The Bulls trailed by nine points at halftime but Jordan scored 15 points in the third quarter, including 13 of Chicago's first 18 points in the half, as Chicago grabbed a one-point lead entering the final period.

Jordan added 10 more in the fourth quarter as the Bulls pulled away from the overmatched Magic.

"They broke us down again," said Hardaway. "Their defense keeps pecking away and we don't play the full 48 minutes."

Jordan shot 16-for-23 from the field and 10-for-14 at the foul stripe while adding five rebounds and five assists.

Orlando opened the game strongly as O'Neal had 19 points and Hardaway 15 in the first half. Orlando held a 31-23 lead after one quarter, and led 56-47 at the half. But Jordan kept the Bulls within striking distance with 20 points.

JSF Shield semifinals

Hussein meet Kufrsoun today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) Shield competition is down to the semifinals as Al Hussein meet Kufrsoun Wednesday and Al Ramtha take on Al Wihdat Thursday.

The Shield is reserved for Premier League teams only and is the second of four annual competitions organised by the JSF. Al Faisali already clinched the first title of the season when they beat Al Wihdat in the Cup Winners' Cup, the opening match of the season.

Titleholders Al Wihdat, who got a first round bye, only played Al Qoqazi, an inexperienced team who were promoted to the Premier League only last season. Al Qoqazi knocked out Al Faisali and advanced to meet Al Wihdat who

could only manage a 2-1 win over the newcomers leaving fans apprehensive about their team's readiness for the semifinals.

Al Wihdat had also appeared well below their usual form in the Arab Cup Winners' Cup which was recently concluded here and in which Al Wihdat were knocked out of the first round.

The other semi-finalists showed a more impressive form as Al Ramtha advanced to the semifinals after a 3-1 win over Al Qadissieh, Al Hussein beat newcomers Shabab Al Hussein 2-1 while Kufrsoun's draw had them play two matches in which they eliminated Al Ahli and Al Jazireh.

Al Wihdat have won the title a record four times. Al Faisali and Al Ramtha three times, Al Jazireh and Amman twice and Al Hussein only once.

Results

Qoqazi - Wihdat	2-1
Qoqazi - Faisali	2-1
Kufrsoun - Ahli	4-2
Ramtha - Qadissieh	3-1
Hussein - Shabab Al Hussein	2-1
Kufrsoun - Jazireh	4-2

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The New York Yankee's shortstop Derek Jeter and Garret Anderson (not pictured), May 27 in the second inning in Anaheim, California (Reuters photo)

Roberts single in 13th lifts Royals past Tigers

KANSAS CITY (R) — Bip Roberts' single in the bottom of the 13th inning scored Sal Fasano with the winning run as the Kansas City Royals extended the Detroit Tigers' losing streak to 12 games with a 5-4 victory Monday.

Fasano led off the inning with a single off reliever Randy Veres (0-4). David Howard laid down a sacrifice but Fasano beat catcher Raul Casanova's throw to second.

Roberts then laced a full-count single to centre and Fasano, running on the pitch, scored ahead of the throw by Kimera Bartee.

Jeff Montgomery (1-2) got the win.

Detroit has lost 32 of its last 36 games. The 12-game losing streak is seven shy of the team record set in 1975.

Kansas City took advantage of three Tiger errors in the ninth to score two runs and tie the game.

At California, Bernie Williams had five hits and three RBI and Ruben Rivera doubled in two runs during an eight-run fifth inning as the New York Yankees routed the Angeles 16-5.

Tino Martinez added three hits, including a three-run homer in the eighth, contributing to a 15-hit attack.

In Oakland, Jose Malave hit his first major-league homer and drove in four runs and Tim Wakefield pitched his first complete game of the year as the Boston Red Sox routed the Athletics 10-3.

The Red Sox erupted for five runs in the second against Steve Wojciechowski (5-1).

At Texas, Darryl Hamilton's third hit of the game, a double scoring Kevin Elster from first in the bottom of the ninth lifted the Rangers past the Cleveland Indians, 3-2.

Chicago starter Jack McDowell (5-3) allowed three runs and eighth hits over 8 2/3 innings.

In Toronto, rookie Marty Janzen allowed three runs in seven innings and John Olerud hit his second career Grand Slam as the Blue Jays defeated the Chicago White Sox 5-4, snapping their eight-game winning streak.

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Request for proposals for Surface Geophysical Surveying

On behalf of the "Water Quality Improvement and Conservation" Project, Ministry of Water & Irrigation, a U.S. contractor invites experienced Surface Geophysical Contracting firms to prepare proposals to provide data collection, and interpretation for an EM37 and refraction seismic survey relative to a Feasibility Study of Artificial Recharge in Jordan.

Offerors are requested to pick up RFP No. Jordan 96-013 documents at room 203, Ministry of Water & Irrigation Building beginning 12:00 O'clock noon, Wednesday May 29, 1996.

Closing date for offers is 12:00 O'clock noon, Sunday June 9, 1996.



Michael Jordan drives to the basket as Orlando Magic guard Anfernee Hardaway pressures during first half action of the Eastern Conference at the finals game May 27 (Reuters photo)

2nd Division Basketball

JBF suspends Abbasi

Hussein, Jeel seek to maintain lead today

By Aleen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Hussein and Al Jeel have relatively easy matches Wednesday and will seek to maintain their lead atop the second division basketball standings with two more rounds to go before the championship concludes June 2.

Leaders Al Hussein and Al Jeel have relatively easy matches Wednesday and will seek to maintain their lead atop the second division basketball standings with two more rounds to go before the championship concludes June 2.

Al Hussein remain the only unbeaten team of the tournament and are slated to return to the first division. Al Jeel scored a crucial 57-44 win over Al Rayah to maintain second place and a chance for promotion to the first division. That will happen when they meet in a play-off with the last-placed

team in the first division later this year. The winner of that playoff will be classified in the first division next season.

Homemmen, a former first division team, are currently third and will have a tough match with Al Jeel Friday.

Al Rayah are closely behind in fourth place followed by Gazet Hashem and Ashrafieh.

Al Abbasi's and Karak's withdrawal from the second division this year means the two teams will be relegated while third division champs Al Fuheis and runner up Abu Nusair will be promoted instead.

ers, Al Abbasi were fined JD 250 for withdrawal from the competition and disorderly conduct of two players. The first, Abdullah Aziz, was issued an immediate ban from playing club basketball, while the other, Basyouni Khaleel, was suspended for a year.

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Wednesday's schedule

Ashrafieh-Hussein 5 p.m. JBF court
Jeel-Gazet Hashem 6:30 p.m. JBF court

STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	SE	SA	Pts
Hussein	3	3	0	232	135	6
Jeel	3	2	1	114	98	5
Homemmen	4	1	3	220	274	5
Rayah	3	1	2	247	240	4
Gazet Hashem	3	1	2	160	210	4
Ashrafieh	2	1	1	85	107	3
Abbasi	-	-	-	-	-	-
Karak	-	-	-	-	-	-

★ Relegated to 3rd division

French open

Novotna, Muster advance; Leconte out

PARIS (AFP) — Tenth-seeded Jana Novotna put the memory of last year's Roland Garros humiliation behind her and swept into the second-round of the French Open here Tuesday by scoring a ruthless 6-0, 6-2 victory over fellow-Czech Ludmila Richterova.

Just twelve months ago the 1993 Wimbledon finalist stood poised to reach the fourth-round of the championships after taking a third-set 5-0, 40-0 lead over Chanda Rubin... only to be beaten — the American player surging back to save nine match points.

On Tuesday, however, Novotna made no mistakes on a sun-drenched number-one show-court racing into a second-round clash against Taipei's Shi-Ting Wang.

Winner of the Madrid Open Saturday, Novotna showed superb fluency in her groundstrokes and her performance will be an ominous warning to opponents as she closes on a possible quarter-final showdown with joint-world number-one Monica Seles.

Other early winners enjoying the bright weather after yesterday's non-stop drizzle and damp included big-serving eighth seed Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands and the talented Romanian Irina Spirea. Schultz-McCarthy beat home player Alexia Dechaume-Balleret 6-4, 6-4 while the 22-year-old Spirea, who joined the



Frenchman Henri Leconte cries after losing his match against Thomas Johansson of Sweden in the first round of the what he described as his last French tennis Open at Roland Garros Stadium May 27 (Reuters photo)

growing army of players to thwart Mary Pierce this season by defeating the French player in the final at Amelia Island last month, charged past French wild-card entry Catherine Mothes 6-0, 6-1.

Germany's Barbara Rittner beat Katrina Studenikova of Slovakia by the same scoreline.

Meanwhile Japan's seventh-seed Kimiko Date, a semi-finalist twelve months ago, had a tough time against Asa Carlsson of Sweden, dropping the first set 3-6 before recovering to take the second 6-3.

In the men's singles, defending champion and second-seed Thomas Muster got off to a fast start on centre-court against Denmark's Frederik Petterson. The

Austrian left-hander pocketed the opening sets 6-4, 6-2. Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine, a semi-finalist in 1993 and a player who has always reached at least the fourth round in his four previous visits, led Nicolas Pietrangeli of Ecuador 6-2, 6-2.

Among other winners Monday were men's No. 6 Yevgeny Kafelnikov, No. 7 Jim Courier, No. 10 Wayne Ferreira and No. 12 Alberto Costa. Among the women advancing were No. 5 Iva Majoli, No. 6 Anke Huber, No. 12 Mary Pierce, No. 14 Amanda Coetzer and No. 15 Martina Hingis.

The only seed eliminated was men's No. 16 Malivai Washington.

Capriati crashes at 1st hurdle

PARIS (AFP) — Jennifer Capriati's return to the tournament where she made her name as the youngest-ever semi-finalist six years ago, ended in a first-round defeat against China's Jing-Qing Yi Tuesday.

America's former golden girl, who reached the last-four at the French Open as a 14-year-old before being stopped by eventual champion Monica Seles, fought like her tiger in her first appearance at the championships in three years. But despite non-stop support from the hundreds of spectators packed around the outside court — it was not enough.

The 22-year-old Chinese player from Beijing, making her debut at the championships and playing in only her second Grand Slam tournament, looked to be home and dry when she led 6-3, 4-1. But the reigning Olympic champion surged back until a dreadful forehand error in the vital twelfth game, which would have put the second-set into a tie-break, let Yi off the hook.

Yi showed her remarkable baseline accuracy and patience at Indian Wells earlier this year when, as a lucky-loser, she stormed back after losing the first set 0-6 to upset experienced twelfth-seed and former Wimbledon finalist Zina Garrison-Jackson. Currently ranked 71st, the Chinese player broke into the world's top 100 after reaching the Pattaya final last year and in 1995 improved 253 places in the rankings.

Big three get through on rain first day

Andre Agassi struggled with his temper and a rookie qualifier, Pete Sampras won a match many thought he might lose. Monica Seles made a stirring return on a court dedicated to her idol.

On a deary, rainy opening day at Roland Garros, the big names overcame injury worries, tricky opponents and emotional moments to move safely into the second round of the French Open.

Sampras, the men's top seed, served 23 aces and beat Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (7-5) for his first victory on clay this year, setting up a second-round clash against two-time champion Sergi Bruguera.

"I'm trying to play on my terms, be aggressive, not be so passive like I have been in the past," said Sampras, who has never advanced past the quarterfinals in Paris.

Agassi, No. 3, received a warning and a point penalty for audible obscenities — one

strike away from disqualification — before taking advantage of a rain delay to subdue Spaniard qualifier Jacobo Diaz, 6-1, 6-7 (9-7), 6-4, 6-4.

"I have a tendency to make it more difficult on myself than it needs to be," said Agassi, who had 77 unforced errors.

Seles, playing her first French Open since her stabbing in Germany three years ago, easily beat French wild card Caroline Dhenin, 6-1, 6-1, in 52 minutes.

"The French Open has always had a very special place in my heart," said Seles, who won here three straight times from 1990 to 1992. "Going out there and thinking that this court is named after somebody that I really loved, now I'm playing my first match coming back on it, it's in some way a new beginning. "Maybe somebody was looking at me from above," she said. "Hopefully she (Lenglen) was watching me play today. It would mean a lot to me."

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Both vulnerable, South deals:

♠ 97
♥ K J 9
♦ A J 10 8 3
♣ K J 10

WEST EAST
♠ K 6 5 4
♥ 10 6 4 3
♦ 9 8 4
♣ Q 8 2

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 10 8 2
♥ A Q
♦ K Q 2
♣ 7 8

The bidding:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2NT Pass
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♠

When skill alone might not be enough, it does no harm, circumstances permitting, to pull the wool over the opponent's eyes. South's sleight-of-hand here paid handsome dividends.

This hand is from a team match. Things had not been going well for North-South, so South barged to six spades in an attempt to recover something from earlier disasters. We recommend either a bid of three spades, which would be forcing in

this sequence, or an invitational jump to four no trump, inviting North to bid a small slam with a maximum two-no-trump response. Both actions would have kept the contract below the slam level.

Obviously, a club lead would have left declarer with no play. Indeed, that would have been our choice. Against a small slam, an attacking lead will gain more often than a safe one from three low cards. After a heart lead, it seemed that the contract hinged on the trump finesse, but declarer decided that, given a ruff, he could engage in some skulduggery at little cost.

The first trick was taken with the ace of hearts, the queen of hearts was overtaken with the king and the jack of hearts was cashed for a diamond discard. Now the nine of spades was run to West's king.

West could not wait to shift to a diamond. Declarer won in hand, drew trumps and claimed the rest of the tricks.

While we applaud South's effort, West could have avoided the debacle by simply letting dummy's nine of spades hold the first lead of the suit. On the second round of trumps East would signal by discarding a high club, and the defenders will get the two tricks which were their due.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince, Princess visit Bayt Al Bawadi

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal and Princess Alia Al Faisal on Tuesday visited Bayt Al Bawadi of Queeo Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) at Abdoun. Bayt Al Bawadi, which was inaugurated on Monday by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma in the presence of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti is a permanent exhibition for ceramic and carpet produced by the QAF's various projects. It serves as a centre for marketing products of the various projects created by the fund to provide job opportunities for job-seekers. It also seeks to revive manual and traditional crafts in Jordan. Prince Faisal and Princess Alia were accompanied by the QAF's executive director and member of the QAF board.

Israel to send first astronaut to space

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel will soon send its first astronaut into space on a U.S. shuttle following an agreement with the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), an Israeli space official announced Tuesday. Space agency director general Youval Neeman said a framework agreement had been concluded with NASA on April 30, but the date of the flight and the identity of the future astronaut have yet to be set. The announcement came two weeks after a European rocket launched Israel's first telecommunications satellite, Amos, into space.

Tomb of Likud founder Begin vandalised

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Vandals have desecrated the tomb of Menachem Begin, former prime minister and founder of Israel's right-wing Likud party, in a cemetery on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem, police said Tuesday. A spokesman said police found the tomb covered with spray-painted graffiti apparently linked to Wednesday's national elections in which current Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu is challenging Labour incumbent Shimon Peres for the post of prime minister. "Peres, shalom haver," (Peres, goodbye friend) read one slogan, picking up U.S. President Bill Clinton's famous farewell to assassinated Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Also scrawled on the gravestone were "Peres was assassinated, Netanyahu go home," and "Rabin was murdered, we will avenge his death with blood." Investigators said the confused nature of the graffiti suggested the vandals were young or mentally unbalanced. Begin served as prime minister from 1977 to 1983 and died on March 8, 1992.

Peres angry that Rabin killer can vote

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was quoted as saying on Tuesday it was a crime that the law allowed Yitzhak Rabin's jailed assassin to vote in Wednesday's national election. "It is scandalous. We are talking about a man who murdered a prime minister," army radio quoted Mr. Peres telling the cabinet at its weekly meeting. "How can you murder and also be able to vote?" Israel's supreme court ruled two weeks ago that Yigal Amir could vote for prime minister and parliament in the election, saying there was no clear law that would disenfranchise him for killing the leader of the Jewish state. An Israeli woman had petitioned the court to take away Amir's right to vote, arguing the right-wing law student had tried to undermine Israeli democracy by shooting the prime minister at a Tel Aviv peace rally on November 4. "If that's the law, then it is a stupid law," the radio said Mr. Peres told his ministers.

Greek, Turkish boats bump near disputed island

ATHENS (R) — Greek and Turkish patrol boats bumped while manoeuvring near a disputed eastern Aegean islet on Tuesday, causing minor damage but no injuries, a Greek French ministry spokesman said. The two boats were near the barren rock islet of Imia, known as Kardak by Turkey. The neighbouring NATO members came close to an armed clash over the islet in January. Greek and Turkish naval and coastguard boats have brushed and bumped each other since while engaging in "cat and mouse" manoeuvres in the sensitive frontier ahead. Turkey has called for negotiations on the disputed islet and Greece, claiming sovereignty, has challenged Ankara to take the case to the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

Israel lets Palestinian journalists back in

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel will allow Palestinian journalists inside its borders to cover the Israeli elections on Wednesday, a government spokesman said. Palestinian journalists were included in an all-encompassing ban imposed on Palestinians three months ago in the wake of a series of suicide bomb attacks carried out by militants opposed to the peace process. On May 13, Israel allowed some 50 journalists to bypass the ban, principally to cover Wednesday's elections, which are seen as crucial to the peace process. But three days later, the government once again tightened the closure and barred the journalists, citing fears of attacks leading up to the elections. Ehud Barak, the Israeli spokesman for Palestinian affairs, said Tuesday that most of the 50 journalists would be allowed back in, except for one who had entered Israel illegally and been arrested.

Ancient scripts unearthed in southern Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — A Syrian-British team of archaeologists has unearthed 1,200 scripts dating back to the first century B.C. the official Syrian Arab News Agency reported Monday. The agency said the scripts narrate the origins of ancient Arab dynasties and their relations with neighbouring countries. They were found near the city of Suwayda 96 kilometres south of Damascus.

Police kill Yemen tribesman in clash over land

CAIRO (AP) — Police in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa fought tribesmen claiming they owned government land in a two-hour gunbattle that closed a main neighbourhood. One tribesman was killed, the daily Al Hayat newspaper reported Tuesday. The London-based newspaper said seven policemen were wounded in the clash. An undisclosed number of tribesmen were arrested. Quoting security sources, Al Hayat said police had repeatedly warned the Gaham tribesmen that the land they were claiming belonged to the state. When police approached them Monday, the tribesmen shot at them, triggering the gunbattle, which ended when the men surrendered.

Former Iranian minister shot dead

PARIS (R) — The body of a former Iranian cabinet minister who served under the late Shah was found at his home near Paris on Tuesday, justice sources said. He apparently died of gunshot wounds. The sources identified the man as Reza Mazlouman, believed to have been an education minister before the 1979 Islamic revolution. The sources said the serious crimes squad was investigating the apparent murder after the body was found in an apartment in the suburb of Creteil, east of Paris, on Tuesday afternoon. The Shah's last prime minister, Shapoor Bakht-

King pays tribute to Jordanian industries

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said on Tuesday that Jordanian industries had achieved great progress in a very limited period of time.

The King told Petra, during a visit to the Jordanian Industrial Exhibition at the International Expo Centre in Marj Al Hamam that Jordanian industries were moving ahead towards a better position to compete internationally.

King Hussein expressed happiness on the visit of a Saudi Arabian economic delegation to the Kingdom to discuss means of economic cooperation and their visit to the exhibition which gave them a good idea about "our own achievement."

The King, who was accompanied by His Royal High-

ness Crown Prince Hassan, toured the exhibition and voiced happiness at the level the Jordanian industries had reached and described Jordanian products as competitive and of high quality.

The King received a token gift from the head of the Saudi delegation who visited the exhibition.

King Hussein was received at the exhibition by Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, Amman Chambers of Industry President Khalid Abu Hassan, Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce President Haidar Murad and other officials.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti opened the exhibition on Sunday. The exhibition lasts until June 2, 1996.



His Majesty King Hussein, accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, on Tuesday visits the Jordanian Industrial Exhibition at Marj Al Hamam (Petra photo)

WFP to monitor Iraq food supply

ROME (Agencies) — The U.N.'s food aid agency said on Tuesday it would be responsible for monitoring the equitable distribution of food bought by Iraq under a oil-for-food deal agreed last week.

The Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP) said in a statement it could take three months before food reached the 2.1 million Iraqis worst affected by nearly six years of shortages.

The United Nations slapped a trade embargo on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"It is vital that we stock enough food before the winter, when food needs are greatest and delivery is more difficult because of bad weather," said Mona Hammam, WFP regional manager for the Mediterranean and Middle East.

"In the meantime we will

continue to appeal for resources to cover the relief food needs of the most needy and malnourished in Iraq, at least until September."

Iraq and the United Nations last week signed a partial oil sales accord, allowing Baghdad to export \$2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicine.

Turkish officials on Tuesday visited the Iraqi section of a joint pipeline to prepare for its opening under the oil-for-food deal, the Iraqi oil ministry said.

Delegates from Turkey's state-owned oil transport firm Botas travelled to Kirkuk, 300 kilometres north of Baghdad, to inspect the pipeline and pumping stations, the ministry said.

The delegation discussed the pipeline in Baghdad on Monday with Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rasheed.

Qaboos urges dialogue not isolation of Iran, Iraq

MUSCAT (Agencies) — Oman's Sultan Qaboos Ben Said was quoted on Tuesday, as saying Washington's policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq might not resolve differences and could delay solutions.

"I believe that when there are problems (between states) ... a truthful dialogue should be conducted to finally reach a solution," he told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat when asked if he thought that the U.S. policy was succeeding.

"I would like to answer this question in another way ... I am not a supporter of one who says that a state should be isolated because putting it in the corner might not lead to resolving the problem and could delay reaching a solution," said the sultan.

Oman, which shares the only entrance to the Gulf with Iran, has a close working relationship with Tehran but is also one of Washington's long-time Arab allies.

It was one of few regional states which called for dialogue with Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war while

others gave Baghdad varying degrees of support.

The United States regards Iraq and Iran as potential threats to its oil-rich Gulf Arab allies and has a declared policy of trying to isolate and contain the two states.

Sultan Qaboos, leader of the first Gulf Arab country to host an Israeli trade office, also defended his ties with the Jewish state but stressed that full diplomatic relations would be possible only after a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He also said the anti-government unrest in Bahrain is "an internal crisis" which requires a solution from within.

Official led by Shiite Muslims demanding a restoration of the parliament which the Sunni Muslim-led authorities suspended in 1975.

"I'm convinced that the Bahraini government must work to overcome this crisis, because it is an internal crisis which requires a solution applied from within," Sultan Qaboos told Al Hayat.

Lockerbie crisis over in 'near future' — Qadhafi

CAIRO (AFP) — The crisis between Libya and the West over the Lockerbie bombing will be resolved in the "near future," Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi told the Egyptian government daily Al Akhbar on Tuesday.

"The Lockerbie affair is to do with politics, not common law and will be resolved in the near future," Colonel Qadhafi said during a meeting with Egyptian deputies on Monday night.

Libya has been subjected to a U.N. air and arms embargo since 1992 for refusing to hand over to the United States or Britain two Libyans accused of bombing a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people.

According to an Arab

up an international tribunal to try the two men composed of four judges — from the United States, Britain, France and Libya — who would also nominate a fifth judge to chair the tribunal which would sit under Scottish law.

A Libyan diplomat in Cairo said the tribunal could sit in a neutral country chosen by common consent and not caught up in the crisis.

He said Libya insisted the two men were not tried under either British or American law.

In the past Tripoli has offered to turn over the two Libyans to a neutral country or international body such as the world court, but this has been rejected by Washington

Experts call for legal changes to enhance press freedom, lift curbs

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Experts have recommended that legislation be modified to strengthen freedom of the press and the restrictions on media coverage as stipulated in the Press and Publications Law be limited to issues directly related to national security and the Kingdom's social fabric.

The experts, members of a committee entrusted with following up the deliberations of a two-day seminar held here early this month, also called for efforts to increase the efficiency of journalists and reduce pressure on them as well as to upgrade their standard of living.

The seminar was entitled "The Media and Information — Realities and Prospects."

The recommendations announced at a press conference on Tuesday, called for drawing up a legal framework covering political, social, and economic aspects of the press and information institutions within the framework of the Constitution.

They called for reformulating controls on the press so

that misinterpretations, contradictions and duplications are avoided.

They also called on press institutions to provide a JD 75,000 bank guarantee to cover any penalties imposed for violations of the law.

They also called for abolishing imprisonment of journalists and calling for fines instead.

The recommendations suggested forming a special court to handle cases related to press.

Senator Laila Sbari, announcing the recommendations at the press conference, saw these recommendations as a "new and a challenging step" for media personnel as well as the committee members.

On the professional level, the committee's recommendations called for improving the efficiency level of journalists and for protecting journalists from pressure to conceal information or alter facts.

The recommendations called for providing local and international information banks and that press institutions should have advanced

equipment, including libraries and computers.

They also called for furnishing vocational training for press employees through local training courses and gaining experience abroad.

Committee members urged journalists to enrich their general knowledge and to improve their language skills and to focus on covering a specified field.

Improving the social and financial status of media personnel is another important measure which needs to be adopted, according to the recommendations. This will help journalists devote their time and effort to their profession.

The recommendations also called for activating the role of the Jordan Press Association and to help the association to encourage creative and intellectual journalists and protect its members' rights.

The recommendations suggested forming a higher press committee to function as a mediator between the press and the public.

(Continued on page 7)

Iranians observe Ashoura

TEHRAN (AFP) — Millions of Iranians on Tuesday mourned the death of seventh century Shiite Muslim martyr Imam Hussein as officials portrayed him as a model for Iran's defiance of the West.

Almost the entire country has been dressed in black for the past week in preparation for Ashura, or the day Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, and 71 of his followers died at the hands of Umayyad troops in the battle of Karbala, in present-day Iraq, in 680.

Processions past through the streets and people attended ceremonies, organised in mosques, government buildings, schools and make-shift structures known as husseiniyas, meeting places where free food and drink are handed out.

In Tehran, processions made their way through the streets in sweltering heat. Men and young boys carrying chains beat their chests with their hands in a self-flagellation ritual.

Like in the previous two years, the authorities, however, banned mourners from slashing their heads to draw blood for Hussein.

Similar religious demonstrations have been held in Pakistan, Lebanon and Azerbaijan for Ashura. For the Shiites, Hussein symbolises courage, righteousness, innocence and martyrdom.

One of the largest parades was held in central Tehran, where men wept along with women and smeared mud on their heads in an ultimate gesture of sorrow and desperation.

JEA leaves it to Shbeilat to decide on presidency

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) said Tuesday it would not terminate Leith Shbeilat as its president despite a Court of Cassation ruling to uphold a State Security Court verdict that sentenced him to three years imprisonment.

"We are going to keep Mr. Shbeilat as our president although our by-laws stipulate that he should step down," the deputy president of the JEA, Husni Abn Gheida, said.

He told the Jordan Times that it was up to Mr. Shbeilat to decide if he wanted to maintain his title or resign while in detention.

Mr. Shbeilat won a second term as JEA president in February while being tried at the State Security Court on less than a dozen charges.

According to Mr. Abn Gheida, JEA members are planning to meet soon to study the situation.

On March 18, Mr. Shbeilat was sentenced to three years in prison after being found

guilty of slandering Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

He was also convicted of distributing statements deemed harmful to the King.

Mr. Shbeilat, known for his strong rejection of the Arab-Israeli peace process, was arrested Dec. 9, 1995 after delivering speeches in different parts of the Kingdom.

The State Security Court presided over by civil judges found that Mr. Shbeilat's lectures had forthrightly criticised the Hashemite family and accused its members of treachery.

Mr. Shbeilat filed nomination to run in a parliamentary election in April but the election authorities turned down the nomination because he had not met the requirements of the candidacy. A court upheld that decision.

Mr. Shbeilat was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 1992 for sedition but was released following a Royal pardon the same month.

Talks under way on new Kabul coalition

KABUL (Agencies) — Government officials have begun talks with a former enemy faction to decide the composition of a joint interim government, a spokesman for the faction said Tuesday.

The negotiations follow just days after a breakthrough between President Burhanuddin Rabbani, and former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose Hezb-e-Islami faction had until recently sought to topple the government.

and any groups that join us, Hezb-e-Islami spokesman Ghairat Baheer told the Associated Press during a telephone interview in the Pakistani capital Islamabad.

Mr. Hekmatyar earlier said Mr. Rabbani was willing to relinquish control of the prime ministry, the defence ministry and the finance ministry. In exchange, Mr. Rabbani was to remain as president for six months until elections are held.

COLUMN

Indonesia bans women from foreign beauty contests

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia Tuesday banned its women from foreign beauty competitions after a local contestant appeared at the Miss Universe pageant in a swimsuit. "The conclusion from the President (Suharto) is no foreign beauty contests for Indonesian women," Women's Affairs Minister Mien Sugandhi said. "There is no bargaining on that...because it is not in line with Indonesian culture." Published photographs of law student Alya Rohali, 20, in a swimsuit during the Las Vegas event earlier this month sparked debate across the mainly Muslim nation. "We reject beauty contests that are against religious values and culture," said Ms. Sugandhi, who previously described Miss Rohali's swimsuit pose as vulgar. Indonesia's Muslim population — more than 85 per cent of 195 million people — is the world's largest. Devout Indonesian Muslims cover their entire bodies except for their face but religious tolerance is widely practised.

French student missing in Cardiff found in London

LONDON (AFP) — A 17-year-old French student gone missing in Cardiff, Wales, at the weekend has been found safe in London, police and her parents said Tuesday. Cardiff Police said Fanny Paltor turned up safe Tuesday morning and they were planning to speak with her later in the day. Her father, Marcel Paltor, said earlier from his home near Angoulême, southwestern France, that his daughter had called from London to say she was safe. "My daughter is very upset, she was the victim of aggression but we don't know any more," Mr. Paltor said. Mr. Paltor told AFP that "an Englishman married to a French woman took her in and took care of her, but we don't know if they took her in yesterday or only this morning. I told her to go directly to the police." Fanny, who was working as a waitress in a hotel in Cardiff, had gone missing Saturday after being seen hitchhiking near a nightclub in Cardiff and getting into a white car with five men on board between the ages of 20 and 25.

Shanghai teenager beats weight-loss record

SHANGHAI (R) — A Shanghai teenager who could not ride a bicycle and was too embarrassed to go to school has beaten the Chinese record for losing weight, shrinking to nearly half his former size. Liberation Daily said Tuesday. Geng Hongda, 17, loved eating and used to eat five meals a day, with a special liking for chicken and duck skins and chips, which caused his weight to reach 153 kilograms, it said. He was so heavy he could not ride a bicycle and was too embarrassed to go to school, with people avoiding him because he was too smelly, it said. In January 1995 Geng entered a city hospital with a special programme for weight reduction run by a doctor named Jiao Donghai, who in 1993 helped another person shed 62.5 kilograms, which was the previous weight-loss record. Dr. Jiao